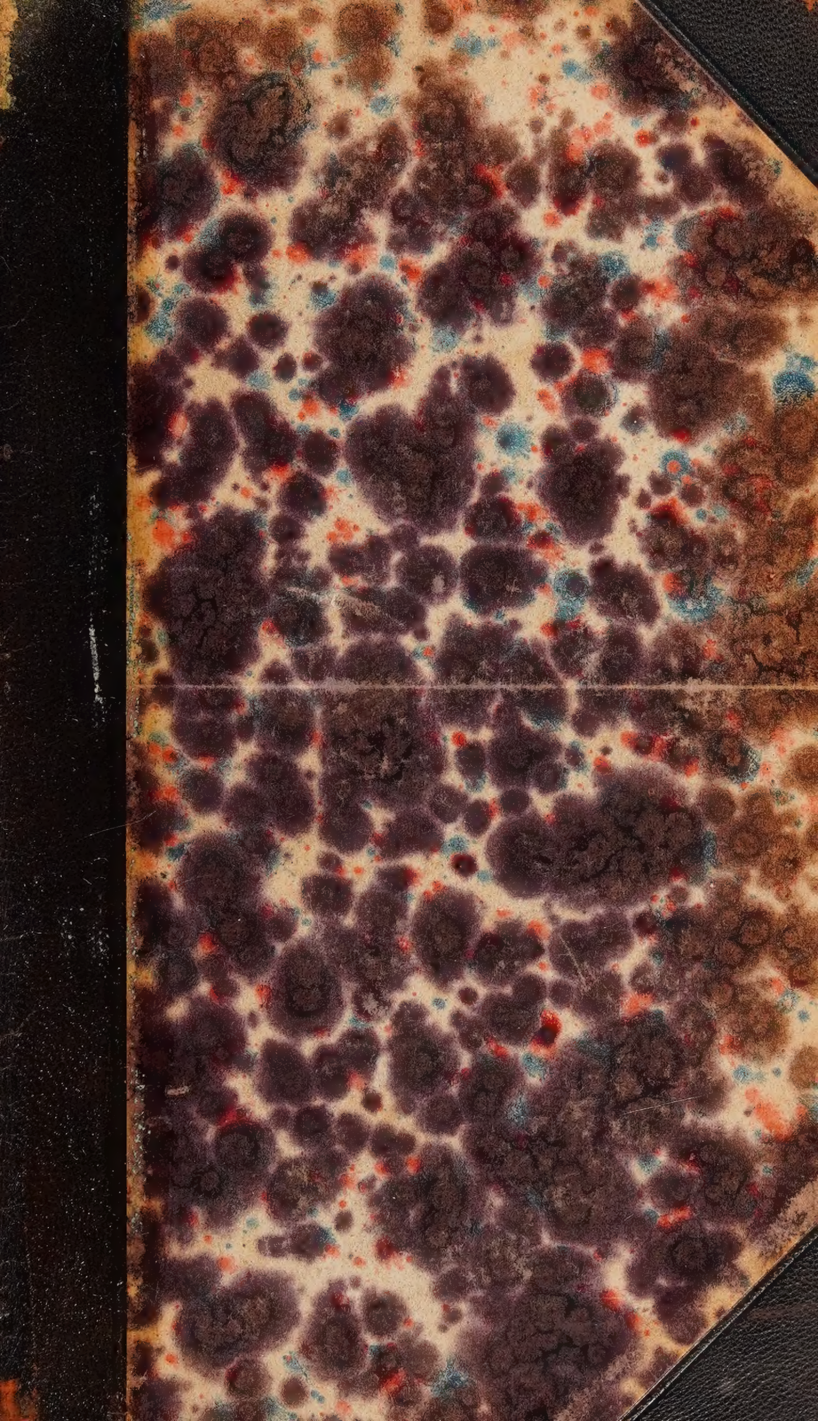

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DISCOURSES

ON

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

BY

ISAAC LEESER.

הלוא כה דברי נאם ה׳ כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע׃
ירמ׳ כג׳ כט׳׃

"BEHOLD! THUS IS MY WORD, SAITH THE LORD, LIKE THE FIRE,
AND LIKE THE HAMMER THAT SHIVERETH THE ROCK."
Jeremiah xxiii. 29.

VOL. IV.

THIRD SERIES.

PHILADELPHIA:
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PREFACE.

The preceding three volumes in this series were published at two different times in 5597 and 5601. Since then I have not, till now, collected my sermons into volumes, and the present is the first of the third series, which will comprise mainly those addresses delivered from 5601 to 5610, when my connexion with the Mikvé Israel Synagogue terminated. Since then I seldom committed my remarks to writing, and depended almost universally on extemporaneous speaking, even without any notes whatever, and it was but rarely that I wrote down afterwards what I had delivered from the inspiration of the moment. Therefore it has happened that though I addressed the congregations all over the country much more frequently than before, not many of these speeches can now be recalled. At a later period, should my life be spared, and the public desire it, I may write out some of the most important topics which I was permitted to discuss before audiences in various places, as their substance is by no means forgotten; but for the present this must be omitted, as the materials on hand already will swell this collection to a far greater extent than was thought likely to be the case when my intention to undertake the work was announced in the various circulars issued by me. I have made it a rule to lay my writings aside without referring to them again; in order that I may judge impartially of them when the needed time to use them shall have come; and thus it happened that I was both ignorant of their contents and not aware of the quantity I had composed till after a portion of these volumes had been reprinted. I must therefore request the public, and my subscribers in particular, to excuse me that the amount of matter presented to them is more than was honestly estimated when their support was asked. It is confidently hoped, however, that all the various sermons, addresses, and prayers may be found to have sufficient interest to make them somewhat valuable for future reference and use, and that they may be regarded hereafter as vehicles of information on many points, and be used for private devotion in the family circles of our people. If this wish should be realized, I shall be amply compensated for the thought, labour, and care expended in preparing them for the press, and presenting them to the public as my humble contribution to Jewish religious literature.

PHILADELPHIA, { Tamuz 18th, 5629.
July 21st, 1867.

DISCOURSES

ON THE

JEWISH RELIGION.

DISCOURSE I.

THE DANGERS OF ISRAEL.

God of Israel, the everlasting Father! be with us in our waking hours, and at the time when we are sunk in sleep; protect us by the shadow of thy wings when we are living, and shield our spirits under the throne of thy grace when our task is ended. And watch over us with thy paternal care, and give strength to our virtuous resolves, that we may not stumble on the path of righteousness which we would fain pursue, unless prevented and lured away by the temptations of the world and the inclination for evil inherent to our frame. O holy One! establish Thou firmly the work of our hands, and cause that through us thy name may be glorified; teach us to see the errors of our ways, so that we may not profane thy blessed service, whilst our selfish ignorance would vainly influence us to believe ourselves actuated by pious motives. Implant in our hearts a firm brotherly love towards all Israel our brethren, and remove from us and from them all manner of malevolence and causeless hatred; and those who presumptuously rise up to disturb the peace of thy household, and who wickedly endeavour to mislead the children of thy adorers from the true path of thy law, confound Thou in thy mercy, that the evil they attempt may not take root in the minds of thy servants; and grant that these as well as all other sinners may speedily discover the perniciousness of their doings, and return unto Thee with a sincere repentance, a repentance of love and truth, to be reunited to Thee and thy pure worship in faith and humility. And spread upon all thy people Israel, wherever be their dwellings, the pavilion of thy peace, and cause them to dwell securely in the midst of the nations whither Thou hast banished them; and preserve them entire as one people, to be ultimately restored to the mountains of Zion, where thy glory is again to dwell as in days of old, as in former years, all obeying one law, worshipping in one manner, servants all with one heart, speaking all with one tongue, adoring all the one, O Thee alone, our Father, God, and Saviour! Amen.

Brethren!

We read in Jeremiah, xxx. 7:

ועת צרה היא ליעקב וממנה יושע : ירמיה ל׳ ז׳ ׃

"It is even a time of trouble unto Jacob, and therefrom he shall be saved."

Let us apply this saying of the great prophet who viewed with his own eyes the downfall of Jerusalem's glory, a downfall which others had merely predicted, which he, however, had the misfortune to witness as well as to foretell, to the present situation of our people all over the world. It is not to be concealed, that for many years past there have gradually sprung up a feeling of restlessness under ancestral rules and a striving after innovations, which both threaten the subversion of the ancient landmarks, while new ideas have been broached which are full of evil portents to our existence as a separate religious community. What compared with this danger were the persecutions of ignorant ages? Then indeed thousands of innocent victims were led forth to the slaughter, and the adversaries of Jacob loudly exulted, as the flames consumed the many noble martyrs who voluntarily surrendered themselves to a painful death, to seal with their life's blood their devoted attachment to the law of God. But these slaughters brought no real danger to Jacob's faith; for, though many fell off, though many, too feeble or too worldly to choose death, preferred to join themselves to the nations of the earth: still the holy example of the glorious sufferers stimulated the multitude to love the more ardently the religion which their friends had sanctified with their last expiring breath. And the greater the danger was which each individual incurred for the profession of the law of Moses, the greater became the ardour to preserve untouched the holy birthright of Jacob; and with every effort of the enemy the blood of circumcision became a more willing sacrifice, the weekly Sabbath became a more refreshing day of rest, and the acknowledgment of *Adonai Echad* became more ardently the watchword of the house of Israel in all their dwellings, despite that the enemy stood near, eager to seize every opportunity to wreak his hatred upon the unoffending sons of Abraham. O noble indeed were those devoted spirits who preserved, amid all the great tribulations they had to encounter, the holy inheritance which was theirs from their forefathers; and glorious is now their reward; for their unresisting perseverance has at last overcome the malevolence of their opponents, and the name of Israel is now more respected than it has been since the dispersion of our nation, and we are called a people who nobly sustained themselves as the preservators of Heaven's holy gift to the children of man, under such trials and difficulties as would have broken down every other people save it be the descendants of him who went forth at the bidding of his Master, from Ur in Chaldea, to be a stranger in a strange land, himself and his descendants, for a period of four hundred years.

It was thus, beloved friends, that the means relied on for our extermination have wrought the opposite effects, and have made dear and precious to us the fruit of the tree of life, which flourished abundantly, nurtured by the blood of those who strove to preserve it from the rude assaults of unholy hands, and to seek shelter under its wide-spreading branches. But now and of late we have dwelt in comparative peace; our opponents, despairing of destroying us by the sword, have changed their mode of attack; they open wide their arms to receive us in their fatal embrace, and to make us forget our destiny, whilst we are invited to revel in luxuries and pleasures, even literally, in luxuries and pleasures forbidden by our holy laws, and death-bringing to our national existence. Now the Jews are called brothers, yea the elder brothers of the new recipients of the law in the manner it was modified to suit a gentile world! But is the Jew as such more loved? or his law more prized? O no, for now *is* a time of trouble to Jacob, and may God in his wisdom and mercy save him therefrom. The seeming security is a fatal delusion, my brethren! the haters of our name wish to induce us to give up to flattery that which force could never obtain from us. They therefore pretend to mourn over our blindness, over our literal attachment to the word of the law, whilst, they allege, we are unmindful of the spirit and essence of religion. They therefore tell us, that the Jew is unwise to preserve his separate position and his distance from his gentile friends; they wish to make him believe that it is of no moment whether he eat of one sort of food or the other; they tell him, it is of no moment whether he observe the first day of the week or the seventh as devoted to rest and worship; they tell him it is of no moment whether he wed a daughter of the stranger or a maiden from the children of the faithful: they tell him these absurdities and many others; and shall we yield to these advances? or are we to stand idly by and make no effort to counteract the evil which is thus impending? Believe me, that theoretical religion is but a mockery of Judaism. Ours is not a system of faith merely, it is far more, it is a system of actions which is to regulate our conduct as individuals, as members of the community, as children of the everlasting Father! For so we read in Deuteronomy, vi. 2, 3: "In order that thou mayest fear the Lord thy God, to observe all his statutes and commandments which I command thee, thou, thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and in order that thy days may be prolonged. Hear then, Israel, and observe to do, so that it may be well with thee, and that ye may greatly multiply, as the Lord the God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in a land flowing with milk and honey." In what then does our religion consist? Surely in actions, in individual piety, in neighbourly love, and in devotion to the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Is there then not danger in listening to the advice of strangers, in even weighing for a moment whether their arguments be of weight or otherwise? For to doubt even of the necessity of our duties as we have received them is incipient treason, and is already the first step to rebellion against the Lord! And has it come to this that we, the first inheritors of the law, are to be guided by those who borrowed some of its precepts from us? are Israelites to govern themselves by the erroneous ideas which the gentiles have engrafted upon our simple mode of interpreting Scriptures?

Some may say, that they will take reason for their guide, and apply the light of an enlightened modern philosophy to teach them the proper explanation of the law! But this is the very danger which now threatens the house of Jacob, of which we have been speaking. It is false reasoning to ask: "Why are we to kill our beasts after the prescribed mode of the ancients? why are we not to mingle at the friendly board with our gentile friends? what harm can there arise from my marrying the woman whom I love, although we differ in speculative opinions? what good can the Lord devise by my impoverishing myself by an observance of the festivals and the Sabbath? what good can result from our fasting on certain days to commemorate the destruction of the Jewish empire? for are we not free, are we not equals in the eyes of the law? are not offices open to us no less than to other citizens? can we not boldly profess our religion? what need is there then to look forward to a restoration to our ancient land, a country which we neither desire nor think equal to the states of civilized nations where we live?" But let us reply to these false positions: The law was given to render us a separate people, in order to make the glory of God known ultimately to all nations of the earth; therefore we were to be separate in our manners and habits no less than in the superior knowledge which had been given to us of the UNITY of God. And to prevent our uniting with those by whose opinions ours might become corrupted, by being inmates at their houses and partakers of their food, we were ordered to observe certain formalities with the food we are to take for our sustenance, in order to be even in mere bodily matters reminded of the high destiny which is ours, and of the great goodness of the Creator in selecting us to be the instruments of his grace and love to all the children of man, and to set an insuperable bar to a too close intimacy with persons differing from us in their rule of life.—And yet when the fair daughter of the stranger attracts us, and our desire is kindled, shall we hasten to sacrifice at her feet our attachments to the law and our parental commands? Ay, is this obeying the voice of the Most High? Tell me—can Israel remain a people when her sons swerve from the law, drawn away by the ties of unholy kindred? Or say you, we wed not by forswearing, as of old it was wont, the religion of our fathers? But tell me then, does the daughter of the stranger worship with you at the same shrine? does she too bend the knee to the One, who is Israel's God, as do the daughters of our people? or does she teach her children to acknowledge the pure faith, and to pray to none save the Creator, to acknowledge no law save the law which He ordained? Or rather, will she not endeavour to lead them to her mode of thinking, and to educate her children in tenets and ceremonies which are and ought ever to be foreign to our people? And say truly, will not the evil spread, and bring a canker into our vitals, and destroy the remnant that has escaped the many bitter persecutions and trials we had to encounter? No, brothers of the house of Israel! the gentile blood must not mingle with that of Jacob; for too many of the patriarch's sons and daughters have already been sacrificed to this destructive intercourse, and too many families have already been cut off from the community of the faithful, as our own eyes have seen.

The festivals and Sabbaths too we are to deem of no importance; we fear being impoverished by our forsaking our daily toil. But are we believers, are we the descendants of those who followed the guidance of Moses into the trackless wilderness, fed for forty years by God's providence, without ploughing the soil, or reaping a harvest? And did not millions upon millions rest on the Lord's holy days, and yet obtain bread to eat and raiment to put on? and are we to doubt, to hesitate whether it be prudent to obey? to ask, "what is this day more than other days," as once a scoffing heathen did of one of our ancient sages? What is this day? Even the day ordained by the Lord, instituted by his providence to bring peace, and rest, and refreshment to the labourer wearied by toil, and to bid the soul rejoice in a renewed love to her Maker. For so we read (Exodus xvi. 28, 29): "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to observe my commandments and my laws? See, that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread for two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out from his place on the seventh day." It is want of faith, a wicked doubting of the goodness and of the truth of God, to suppose that any injury can result from the observance of the holy rest; for He who provided manna for two days to those who came forth from Egypt, can and does send his blessing upon our labours even at this day, and we may truly say with David (Ps. xxxvii. 25), "I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging bread." And admit for a moment that our keeping Sabbath should absolutely deprive us of an opportunity of acquiring a large share of wealth: still then would we be more likely of enjoying the portion of worldly goods which we have lawfully obtained, than we should be in consuming the immense hoard which unlawful striving should have brought. And as regards the notion, that the Creator cares not about the particular day, provided one out of seven be set apart to his service, we must say that such a mode of arguing would be subversive of every thing like positive religion. The Scriptures are emphatic as to the precise period which has been commanded;

and even that period, or no other, must we sanctify and set apart as devoted to the service of our Creator.

Then as to the fasts commemorative of our national downfall. O say not that our captivity is ended! we are scattered, not gathered together; we are divided, not united; we are severed, and not yet are Judah and Ephraim one on the mountains of Israel. And say where is the glory of the law which is to enlighten all nations? where is the light of truth which is to guide all the families of the earth? are our hearts one in the service of the Most High? are there no dissensions in the midst of our scattered communities? has Elijah come, and are the hearts of parents turned to the children, and the hearts of children to their parents? And can Judah awaken her harp to hymns of praise in every land, unawed by the threat of the adversary? Alas! alas! our harps are still hung upon the willows, and the souls of the sons of Jacob are still grieved because of the burning which the Lord has burned. O! yet is desolate the beautiful Jerusalem; yet is captive the daughter of Zion; and over every land her sons are scattered, and they wander from clime to clime to seek rest for their weary foot, and to provide sustenance for their little ones; with anxious care oppressed, scorned not rarely for the sake of their belief, for their unswerving truth and faithfulness to God's ancient law, they lift their eyes on high and ask for that protection which they so much need from their God, who yet never forsook his people. O! let us then fast, and let us pray to our Creator on the days which are devoted to the memory of our national downfall, and let us not forget in our prosperity those of our brethren who yet languish in sorrow and oppression; and let us in our exultation over the liberty we enjoy not forget, that it is not our own strength of arm nor our wisdom which has furnished us enlargement, but the mercy of the Lord, extended to us not for our righteousness, but only because He is good, and for the sake of the covenant which He swore unto our fathers.

These are some of the views which hastily have presented themselves to my mind in dwelling on the subject of the erroneous ideas which an intercourse with friendly gentiles and the false reasoning of a miscalled improving philosophy have of late forced upon our observation. I mean not that we should reject all instruction which gentiles may offer us, to discard the light of reason in entering upon religious investigations; but to impress upon your minds, brothers and sisters of the house of Israel! to take the light of our own ancients, the manner of interpretation which has been handed down to us, to abide by the customs which long and well-established usage has sanctioned, in your mode of thinking and in your manner of acting through life. The opposite tendency, to mark out new ways, to fly after new customs, is the danger which threatens the peace and the unity of the house of Jacob. But dangers as great almost,—for I believe this to be the greatest we ever encountered,—have passed over us, without permanently injuring the vineyard of the Lord, the house of Israel; and guided by his mercy let us hope that this cup of bitterness and confusion too will pass away from us, and leave us, as after every danger hitherto, more devoted and more united in the cause of the law of God.

Brethren! stand firm by the arms which the Lord has given you! be firm in the defence of the right! be indifferent to the taunt that you are not sufficiently enlightened, that you fall behind the improvements of the age, of an age clean in its own eyes, yet being unwashed of its filth. Yes, be united and firm in supporting the cause you believe just; and may God prosper in his mercy the right which, we believe, we are firmly pursuing. Only be strong and of good courage, be not terrified nor dismayed; and may the Lord God of Israel be with you and all Israel wherever you go, from now unto eternity. Amen.

Shebat 28th, } 5601.
Febru'y 19th, }

NOTE.—The above address was delivered before the Shearith Israel Congregation of Charleston, South Carolina, which had then been recently organized in consequence of a bare majority of the old congregation, Beth Elohim, having adopted an organ and other fancies of modern reform. Having been invited to Savannah on some official engagement, I remained over for a few days at Charleston, and was in consequence requested to speak in the temporary Synagogue, on the upper floor of a warehouse on Meeting Street, which had been fitted up as a place of worship. The contrast with the handsome new Synagogue then nearly completed and the other circumstances which compelled my hearers to separate from their former associates, called forth the train of thought, which has found expression in the above.—Twenty six years have since then elapsed, and now the two bodies are again united under the old name, and I have had several times an opportunity to speak to the reunited Kahal in the old Synagogue which has been restored and renovated by the combined efforts of the two divisions, after the effects of war had nearly destroyed the sanctuary. The event is deeply suggestive of serious reflection, which all true Israelites can readily institute for themselves without my prompting.

DISCOURSE II.

LIFE IN FAITH.*

O LORD, God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! who art faithful to thy promises, and true to thy word, look down, we beseech thee, from thy high abode, upon us, thy children, assembled on this day in this house, which we have devoted unto Thee; and as Thou wast pleased to dwell in ancient days, in visible glory, like a consuming fire on the summit of Sinai, and in the tabernacle which our forefathers had reared: so do Thou come now and dwell in the midst of us, though unseen by our bodily eyes, in these walls, and fill our hearts with thy spirit, so that we may devote ourselves to thy service and live in thy fear and consecrate unto Thee our thoughts and our will, even as we are commanded in the law which Thou didst make known to our fathers. We farther beseech Thee to bless the labour of our hands, and to send increase, prosperity and peace among our habitations, in order that we may be free from corroding care, and enabled to live without the temptations to which we otherwise might be exposed by the contentions and distress of mind inherent to penury and want. Give us, likewise, understanding and wisdom to comprehend fully thy ordinances and statutes, that we may be quick in detecting whatever may be pernicious and calculated to lead us astray from the path of righteousness, and to withstand the allurements to transgression to which we are constantly exposed during our sojourn on earth. And do Thou, O our God! bless these thy children, who have strenuously laboured to erect unto thy name a house of prayer, even a minor sanctuary, there to call unto Thee and to send forth the desire of their hearts. Be also pleased to appoint for them a shepherd, one who is true and faithful, full of holy zeal and imbued with knowledge and wisdom, to guide them rightly and to point out to them the way they should go and the deeds they should do, who, without fear or favour will tell them of their faults and reprove them when reproof is required, and to have likewise also a suavity of manner to make lovely to all the words he has to teach, and to make pleasant unto all thy children the accepted mode of worship, the pure religion, the sacred precepts, even as we have been taught by the ancients of old; in order that many who now desire no portion in Israel may be awakened to see the errors of their ways, and return unto Thee with a true and sincere repentance, and rear their children, whom Thou hast given them, to know Thee, to fear Thee, and to love Thee all the days that they live upon the face of the earth. Upon this city and its inhabitants, even upon them who are not of the House of Israel, shed thy grace and goodness, that they likewise may enjoy happiness, tranquillity, and peace, and become, through a virtuous and pious course of conduct, children of everlasting life. And O, let upon the household of Israel thy countenance shine! purify their hearts from deceit, falsehood, and insincerity, and restrain them by mild and paternal chastisement, to remain within the pale of thy law, and to avoid the mingling of themselves with the children of the stranger. And do Thou speedily, O our God! raise thy hand a second time to gather together the outcasts of Israel, and to assemble them as one people in the land which Thou didst swear unto their fathers, and multiply them and plant them on thy holy mountain, there to worship Thee in all sincerity and freedom from foreign rule and the terror of tyrants who know not thy worship; and cause our own eyes to behold thy salvation when Thou returnest to Zion in mercy, there to let thy glory dwell unto everlasting, when Thou establishest the government and restorest the kingdom unto the anointed David, the son of Jessé, thy servant. Amen.

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* This address was spoken at Savannah, Wednesday, Adar 3d, 5601, at the dedication of the Mikva Israel Synagogue, yet standing now (June, 5627). The address will explain some of the history of that structure.

BRETHREN!

The goodly work is done, and we have dedicated this house to the service of the Almighty God, and for the first time since the building that once stood on this spot fell a prey to the devouring flames, have ascended on high the prayers of the remnant of the house of Israel within these walls, reared aloft by pious, willing and ready hands, eager to accomplish the work, so that they might have in this city also a place, where they could assemble and be enabled to call on their God in the language of their ancestors, and to utter the songs of praise which formerly were chanted in the temple, and composed by the sweet singer of Israel. And once more now rest again within the ark devoted for their habitation, the books wherein are written the words of the law of God, to be there witness against us whether or not we remain faithful to our trust. You have done well not to rest until this sanctuary arose out of its ashes, and it foreshadows prosperously for the maintenance among you of the ancient system of faith which has been ours from time immemorial. And it is truly consolatory to observe the growing desire manifested in many places of this country to promote religious worship, and to diffuse the proper understanding of our religion. This fact is doubly gratifying, after the distressing state of indifference which has so long prevailed, and which had caused many to doubt of the permanence of our existence as a distinct community, more especially since so many individuals have forsaken the covenant of Abraham, whilst others have forsworn their faith altogether, and whilst others again have intermarried with the gentiles, and become thereby lost to the house of Jacob. All these lamentable instances of dereliction from duty caused our enemies to rejoice, they fancied that we would gradually diminish, and that our name would, after a lapse of time, be the only remembrance of what we had been. Even many sincere Israelites at times desponded, and feared that the many apostacies would seriously injure us, and that only by constant arrivals from foreign climes could our race be preserved in the Western hemisphere. But, thanks be to the Lord of our destinies! we begin to see a brighter sky, although yet heavy clouds are hanging over us, which but too much forebode evil and sorrow. Lukewarmness and indifference are but too prevalent, and religion is not strongly impressed on our minds; nevertheless, there appear signs of convalescence, of which one is the ceremony of dedication which we have just performed. For years have elapsed, I may say many weary and darksome years, since the service peculiar to Israelites was performed in this city; and the house of God, after having been deserted by worshippers, and afterwards consumed by fire, remained, since its having been rebuilt, untrodden by those who come to pray; but now a new feeling has been awakened, and you are assembled to offer your adoration after the good ancestral rule, and let us hope, with feelings of high resolve, to remain entire in the path of duty as sons of Israel worthy of being the descendants of those who fled hither from the persecution of tyrants, to obey conscientiously the law of Moses, which was prohibited unto them in their native land. Such, my friends, were your forefathers; men who were drawn to their homes by the ties of wealth, of place and high standing, and who nevertheless quitted it in order to be enabled to follow the honest dictates of their conscience in the new lands of the Western World. And now you have arisen after them, to declare your adherence to the same faith for which they suffered so much; and shall it be said, that you are unmindful of their example?—is it merely for to-day that you are to come hither, whilst the desire is awakened to dedicate the house of God?—or rather, will you not long remember the occasion which brings us to this house, and let it call up in you a pious sentiment which is to endure for years, for your whole life? For what is life without virtue?—what are our days without devotion? Look, my friends, upon him who values nothing but worldly advantages, who sees no good in any thing which lays a check upon his appetite, which throws obstacles in the way of his pursuits: and do you think that his days are days of happiness? O no! give him the fill to satiety of his desires, still he cannot say, that real tranquillity ever follows his enjoyments; bestow on him the utmost fruits of his ambition or his avarice, and still he cannot say that he has enough of what he so ardently craves. There is something so unsubstantial in mere worldly things, something so powerless, that their fruition opens but farther avenues of desiring, or fairly causes us to feel disgust, whilst others perhaps envy us because of the extent of our means for procuring happiness, whereas we ourselves feel languid and melancholy, and deplore the evil of our apportioned lot. But turn we to things that are not of this earth, to the beatitude that results from piety and devotion, and we shall there find true sources of happiness; for there, when we rejoice over our success, we need not fear that another has cause for grief, which is too often the case in worldly enjoyments; because when the conqueror sings the song of triumph over the vanquished foe, whilst cities are resplendent with brilliant lights over some signal victory, thousands mourn over relatives slain, over friends dear and prized who never more will return unto them from the plains, where man met his fellow-man in deadly battle array. And whilst the voluptuary revels in his wine-cup, and is vociferous concerning the qualities of his fatal friend, the suffering wife sighs at home over the estrangement of her lost husband, and helpless children perhaps cry aloud for bread, whilst none is near to provide for their pressing wants. But when the righteous returns to his home in the consciousness that by his timely exertion some suffering brother has been relieved from want; or that some mourner has received consolation from his pious advice; or that some sinner has been awakened to a consciousness of his wrong and iniquity; or that some one ignorant of the ways of God has been enlightened by his instruction, and taught to look towards God for aid and support: say, who can suffer at the result he has achieved?—or rather, is not a happy feeling also enkindled in the hearts of others?—do not his fellows partake of his triumphs, which are conducive to the happiness of many, to the injury of no one? O true, an avaricious feeling is engendered, an avarice after more virtue, a desire for more extended usefulness; a feeling of dissatisfaction too is produced, at the smallness of the results of the labours of piety, and the little benefit which every individual exertion produces. But tell me, what will be the effect of this desire for more virtue?—will it be the amassing of more useless wealth?—the striving after more unsubstantial renown? O no; for the result will be akin to the desire, and the righteous man will strive to add to his means of righteousness; he will ask the Lord for more light, and for more blessing upon his exertions in the field of godliness in which he has laboured.

And thus, whilst with worldly pursuits more cares are added, and more disappointments heaped up with every addition to our means, a different result will attend an increase in piety; for with every new deed more tranquillity, more satisfaction, more hopefulness, will be added, and every step in advance which we take will render us more fitted to become active and vigorous in the execution of that part of our task which we have not yet accomplished. And even they who have so great a love for wealth and renown, should still prize virtue and be sedulous for its attainment; for thereby they secure to themselves still more the things they value; since with the absence of fraud from our business, our property, be it large or be it small, will be left the more securely undisturbed in our possession; the good name which is not based upon trick and falsehood may well stand the attacks of malice and envy unharmed, because unassailable; and the security, the absolute certainty almost of our retaining, in all probability, that which is once ours, will, or rather ought to, incite us to seek honour and riches only in the way of virtue and righteousness. And which is this way?—where are we to seek for the principle which is to secure unto us life and happiness, and place our temporal welfare upon the firm basis we have been speaking of? Only in the law of God are we to look for this way, and its words will point out to us the principle we are in quest of. For if we act up to its precepts, we will omit no opportunity of fortifying our minds with heavenly wisdom, and our actions will best comport with our own happiness, and promote, to the utmost of our ability, the welfare of our fellow-men. And so says Solomon, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof better than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left are riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותמכיה מאשר :
משלי ג' יח' :

"She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her, and every one that firmly graspeth her will be made happy." Prov. iii. 18.

And in truth, no course of life can be the way of peace, which looks not to the wisdom of God for its guide; no one can say that he has stretched forth his hand after the fruit of life, who is ignorant of the commandments of the Lord. Because it is knowledge alone of our duties which can make us aware of what we should do; and ready obedience and resignation to the Divine will, or as the Scriptures call it, the laying hold on wisdom, can alone enable us to execute the duties which we know to be required of us. What then should you resolve upon at this day? a day joyful to you, my beloved brethren, because on it you see accomplished a long-deferred hope, and have gratified the wish of praying in this building after the manner of the house of Israel? Nothing else than to secure your temporal no less than your everlasting happiness, by making every effort within your power to become acquainted with your duties, as sons of Jacob's household, and to strive to remove every evil practice, be this social or religious, which the corruptions of the times may have introduced among you. Do not merely consecrate a building of wood and stone, a building which is perishable and liable to decay; but do more, purify your immortal spirits, consecrate your hearts, dedicate yourselves to the service of the Most High, be yourselves holy; for the Lord your God is holy, and desires of you a holiness and simplicity of purpose which cannot put any thing in comparison or competition with his will, as expressed in the law which is in your possession. This consecration of yourselves should consist, as we have hinted already, in the subduing of all unhallowed feelings, in regulating the passions inherent to man, and in teaching you to gratify these natural propensities only then, when they do not enter into conflict with the law of God, and cannot in the least become injurious to yourselves individually and to your fellow-men, whether as individuals or society at large. So as regards simple obedience, you should be careful to follow implicitly all the commandments which may belong to your circle of action. As respects yourselves you should preserve both mind and body free from impurities—you should not indulge in vicious propensities, never allow anger, envy, malevolence, hatred, or duplicity to take root in your heart, and not be guilty of those indulgences and excesses which undermine the health and render the body unfit for a proper habitation of the soul, and may cause you to be carried to an untimely grave, as victims of those transgressions which, though pleasant to appearance in the beginning, yet take ultimately dreadful vengeance on those who were weak enough to yield, when resistance was no less necessary than wise. And as regards your fellow-men, look upon all as brothers—give to each his just due—be punctual in the discharge of your pecuniary obligations to all who may have claims upon you—rob no one of his reputation—be indulgent rather to others' faults—condemn not hastily—and if you have to contend for your own rights, be especially careful that you trample not on the rights of others. In short, love all men, and deny to no one the claims of humanity and good fellowship; not alone to the sons of Israel, but also to every other man, be his creed what it may. You are not the judges of the mercy of God, you know not to whom He will be gracious; you cannot tell who has merited, and will therefore receive, his favour; you cannot set limits to his bounty and goodness; do therefore act mercifully and kindly towards all men, and prove, by your conduct, that religious intolerance, that most odious and pernicious feature, which has so long disfigured the annals of mankind, has no abiding-place in the heart of sincere Israelites. Act always the part of good citizens, and never forget that there are gentiles who have a kindly regard for our people, as was evidenced by the liberal-minded of your fellow-citizens in this place, who, though strangers to our creed, contributed, unsolicited, towards erecting the house of prayer wherein we are now assembled. Such an act proves that not all differing from us despise our faith, and it is accordingly our duty to be doubly diligent to show that mercy to all men which our religion demands, but which was falsely said we were ordered to exhibit towards Israelites only.

In short, let the present joyful occasion be the means to awaken in you all the noble characteristics of our religion, and let no day hereafter pass without your doing something to prove that the meeting of to-day was something more than an idle exhibition. Were it, however, that no good should result from a dedication of this sanctuary, it would, I am almost tempted to say, have been better had it remained in ruins; for nothing is more odious in the sight of our Maker than insincerity; and public worship without piety is that feature against which our blessed prophets so frequently inveighed. Truth—thankfulness—meekness—mercy—these are the characteristics of a godly life, which will cause prayer to ascend on high; deceit — scorn — pride — oppression — are qualities which will close unto us the gates of happiness if even we come with some good deeds to plead for an extenuation of our sins. For so says Isaiah: "When ye come to appear before me—who hath required this at your hand to tread down my courts?" (i. 12.) "Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are become a burden unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hand, I will hide my eyes from you: yea, when ye make ever many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doing from before my eyes, cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow." (14–17.)

So also the Psalmist (Ps. l. 16–21.): "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and why bearest thou my covenant upon thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou seest a thief, then thou runnest with him, and with adulterers thou hast thy portion. Thou lettest loose thy mouth with evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; against thy own mother's son thou utterest slander."

We could readily quote many more passages to prove that the Bible bears emphatic testimony against worship without piety, against outward devotion where brotherly love is wanting. No, brethren! the religion of the Jews is not merely a system of forms, though these are necessary to prove the existence of inward feeling; but it is intended to work upon them in such a manner as to produce, in the most extended sense of the words, devoted worshippers, good citizens, and sincere philanthropists. One set of duties, no matter how carefully practised, absolves us not from the performance of the others; but a perfect character can only be formed by a due observance of all the dictates of religion, as we have said already.

But let no one imagine, that at this late day our religion has become obsolete or antiquated; old it is, few are its adherents; but forgotten, unpractised, or useless it is not; since there cannot be pointed out a single period from its promulgation to our own times, when amidst all the delinquencies of Israel there were not some left who never did forsake the law; and because we see daily before our eyes that there exists in Judaism a recuperative or constantly reviving principle, which seems always the most active in times of lukewarmness and apostasy. Let no one then say that he need not obey, because obedience is unfashionable. What is it to any of us what the others do? Are we to direct ourselves by the foolish conceits of the vain-glorious or unlearned, or those who differ from us in their belief? What concern of ours is it, that so many transgress? We are each answerable for ourselves, that should not be forgotten; we cannot seek shelter behind the faults of our neighbours; and if sinning should unfortunately become even more the fashion of the day than it now is, still it would be justly expected from all of us, from every son and daughter of Israel, to avow boldly a firm belief in the law, and to prove the activity of this belief by a strict adherence to the commandments. Therefore now, beloved brethren! be ye strong in the Lord; have all one heart and one spirit, and go hand in hand towards the perfection and oneness in the precepts of the Lord, and become the devoted servants of the Most High, whom He purposed to raise up unto himself by the miraculous descent on the Mount Sinai, to promulgate unto your fathers the law which the Lord designated for their government. Remember the sources from which you have sprung; remember the sufferings of those who before you bore the name of Israel; remember how they prized the holy word of their Maker, and how they stretched forth their necks to the executioner's sword to sanctify the name of the Lord, sooner than do aught which might resemble a forsaking of the holy testimony which was theirs both by descent and adoption. Remember the many who forsook their native land to profess abroad their abhorred faith, a faith doomed to destruction by ruthless persecutors, but which has so far survived and will continue to live to the end of days. Remember these facts, and then too reflect, that only through obedience can we be happy. Reflect that, whenever we went astray, the punishments denounced against us were poured forth, through the agents of the Lord, in his government of the world,—the sword, the pestilence, the famine, the storm, and the fire. Reflect, that never were we safe when sin had become universal, and that fatal security was always followed by the too sure coming affliction. Reflect, that twice was Jerusalem destroyed; once because of the idolatry which prevailed, and once because of the disunion in her streets, and of the innocent blood which flowed freely, even in the courts of the temple. Reflect, that to-day you have entered into a new covenant, as we may say, to worship the Lord, inasmuch as ye have appeared before Him to open the doors of this house for the admission of worshippers. Reflect, that religion consists not merely in words, but more especially, and in fact, solely almost in a constant, active, striving after perfection. Reflect, too, that ye are sons of Israel, scions of that ancient race who flourish best when the Lord is their acknowledged King, and his law their rule of life. Reflect, also, that the Lord's hand is not shortened, and that He is able to punish now, as He did always, whenever we are ripe for retribution. Reflect, lastly, how befitting to us is sincerity, and that we can truly become a praise to the nations by contributing to the glorification of the name of God, through an entire submission to his decrees; which must prove that his spirit, which was more than three thousand years ago poured out over us, is yet active and fresh, in an unending state of youth, to this very day. And know that, if ye wish to be happy, you must first deserve to be happy, and that as Israelites, born under the law, and bound by the law, you cannot be happy without faith, love, and obedience.

And so also we read in the first Book of Kings, chap. ix.: "And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, that the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me; I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and keep my statutes and my ordinances: then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, you and your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people." And he continues: "And this house shall be desolate; every one that passeth by it shall be astonished and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house?" 1–8.

We have seen how this prediction was literally fulfilled.—Whilst Israel obeyed, the land flourished, and the temple was the residence of the glory of God. But when Israel sinned, the temple was put away from the sight of God, its walls were broken down and its defences destroyed; and the kingdom was snatched away from David's sons, the land made almost a desert, and the people that dwelt there were scattered over all the earth. Nothing but disobedience could have wrought so much destruction, nothing but obedience could have averted the dreadful blow which was struck against Israel's greatness. And now, in our wanderings over many distant lands, we have left unto us the law only, and in all our dwellings the unity of God is yet acknowledged; and, where permitted, we have erected houses of prayer unto his adorable name. Do therefore now stand forward, ye of the seed of Jacob! assembled here this day, and resolve, firmly and truly, to love the Lord your God with all your hearts and all your souls, in order to merit the blessing pronounced upon them who fear the Everlasting One, and to insure that upon these walls, too, the glory of God may dwell, and that no sin of yours shall cause its destruction, until that day when all Israel shall be assembled again together to worship the Lord of hosts on Mount Moriah, the chosen residence of his name. And may you all, who fear the Lord, find strength in His will, and may His blessing and His spirit guide you rightly and truly, and shield you from evil and transgression now and for ever. Amen.

And now, O Lord, our God! we acknowledge that we have sinned and done wickedly, and that for our transgressions, and the transgressions of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people have been rendered a reproach to all who surround us. But, O merciful Father! forgive us even according to thy wonted goodness, and cause our prayer to come before Thee, and make unto us sweet the words of thy law, and let goodness and truth guide us all the days of our life. And forsake us not in our dispersion, and hold thy protecting arm over all our brethren in all their dwellings, and hasten speedily the day of the reassembling of the outcasts on the hills of Israel; so that we, and all children of men, may there worship Thee in truth. Amen.

Adar 3d. } 5601.
Feb'y 24th.

DISCOURSE III.

PRESIDENT W. H. HARRISON.*

O Thou! the great, almighty, and fearful God, who art powerful to slay, and omnipotent to bring unto life, in whose hands are the bodies and souls of the living and the dead, hear our supplication in thy high abode, and give us strength and prosperity in all our doings; be with us in our going out and our coming in; prevent our feet from stumbling; and lead us not in the way of temptation, but preserve us upright in the path of obedience to thy commandments, in which there is life everlasting. And if we stray aside unto evil, if we have tasted in our sinfulness of worldly desires and enjoyments which are prohibited by thy law: cause us speedily to feel the unworthiness of our disobedience, and lead us back to thy blessed fold from which we have strayed. And if our end has come as decreed by thy unerring judgment, if no more days of transient life are ours: then do Thou, O our Father! take our spirit unto thy holy dwelling, there to abide with Thee for ever, even as Thou hast promised to thy servants who have been true and faithful. Amen.

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* General William Henry Harrison was installed President of the United States on March 4th, 1841, and died after brief illness in about a month from that date. The subjoined address was delivered on Sabbath the 5th day of Passover, and is believed to have been the first spoken on the decease of the suddenly summoned chief magistrate of the land.

BRETHREN!

When Abner, the son of Ner, fell by the sword of Joäb, the leader of David's army, the Psalmist gave vent to his feelings in the following words addressed to his servants (2 Sam. iii. 38):

הלוא תדעו כי שר וגדול נפל היום הזה בישראל :

שמואל ב' ג' לח' :

"Know ye not that a chief and a great man hath fallen this day in Israel?"

In the same words may we now mourn over the afflicting and sudden bereavement which has just befallen this extensive land, in the unexpected demise of its chosen chief magistrate, the late President Harrison; for well does it become us, of the remnant of Israel, to mingle our sorrows and our regrets with the sorrows and regrets of our fellow-citizens of other creeds concerning a loss which is no less ours than theirs; since, as the equals in the eyes of the law, we had an equal share with them in the illustrious deceased. And if we are bound by the religion we profess to pray for the welfare of the city in which we dwell, if even it be subject to a tyrannical ruler, and if even we are oppressed there for our opinions, and excluded from the free enjoyment of the rights of man: how much more must we pray for the well-being of a land like this, which we may term our common country; since we are not merely tolerated to worship after the dictates of our conscience, not subject to the arbitrary good-will of a chief and his advisers, but are here a part of the law-making power ourselves, and have a share in the selection of the officers intrusted with the execution of the laws to which we have in a measure assented. —Not that there exists no prejudices in the minds of the majority, of those who differ from us in religious matters; but this much we may freely assert, that our living undisturbed depends not upon the whim of this majority; for the violation of our rights, to oppress us by laws uncongenial to universal equality, would soon lead to the entire overthrow of the liberty which, under Providence, the inhabitants of this land have achieved at the expense of so much labour, so much wealth, so much blood, and so much suffering. Yes, while the liberties of this land stand unimpaired; while no religion, as by law established, becomes the dominant worship of the state; while no test-oaths can be imposed before an incumbent enters upon office; while no orders of nobility or other privileged classes are acknowledged by the constitution and laws of the land: so long will the Israelite, despite of his separate religious views, be a part and parcel of the state, and have a legitimate portion in the welfare of the community, and a personal interest in those whom the popular voice calls to the councils of the nation, and selects as the administrators of the laws. We then say truly that in President Harrison's death a chief and a great man has fallen, not only to gentile opinions, in which he was born and educated, but also to the opinions of the children of Jacob who worship in this house the God of their forefathers.

The name of the late President is so intimately connected with the history of his country, that to many it may seem superfluous to dwell upon the incidents of his life; especially as his decease has been too recent to allow an impartial estimate to be formed of his actions and opinions; the more so since by his elevation to the chief magistracy after a long, ardent, and a well-contested struggle, the dominion of a party has been overthrown who for many years have held the ascendency in the councils and government of the nation. Nevertheless, it seems a fitting occasion to take a rapid view of the services which were rendered by General Harrison, and to show that our text is not misapplied to him.

The war which established the independence of this commonwealth was over, and the constitution, under which it is now governed, had been promulgated, and the first, the greatest of its children, had been selected to preside over the administration of its affairs: when the sound of fierce alarm called again its sons into the field. It was not then the assault of the warlike sons of ancient Britain; not the children of gallant France from whom danger was threatened to the extensive frontiers of this Union; it was not foul treason which had reared her bloody pennon in populous cities or remote districts; but it was the war-yell of the fierce, untamable sons of the forest, who slaughtered without mercy the armed man and the defenceless woman; who spared not, in their murderous lust, the aged sire and the timid maiden, and who were strangers to mercy, and unmoved by the innocent smiles of helpless infancy. The chivalrous spirit of youth was aroused, and round their country's standard flocked many to brave the rifle and the scalping-knife of the wily savage; and among them came a young man, who had left his peaceful studies to share the dangers and hardships of the tented field, though the distinguished name which his father bore might have opened to him avenues of preferment in the calmer walks of life. He soon attracted to himself the attention of the most daring chief of the American revolution, and was speedily promoted to higher rank, the just reward for a devotedness to duty and fearlessness under trials. And fields which smile under the industry of the active husbandman; mountains which are now securely traversed by the solitary traveller, over which flies, with then unthought of speed, the car impelled by the power of steam; spots where at this day are found cities which teem with crowded populations, and are the seat of refinement and elegance; rivers which then flowed amidst primeval forests, over whose banks waved the majestic pine or the towering oak; glades undisturbed, save by the tread of the timid fawn, the stately buck, the prowling wolf, the fierce bear, or the wary fox; solitudes, vocal only to the rush of the eagle's flight, or the scream of the vulture, or the croaking of the raven, or the night bird's howl, or the hissing of the poisonous serpent in pursuit of prey: were in those days won by the prowess of the civilized Caucasian race from the indigenous inhabitants of the land, more savage than the beast of their forests, and as uncultivated as the soil on which they trod. And these turned their backs upon the rising sun, seeking a home in the distant West, yet pursued, as they travelled on, by the wild bee, the forerunner of the white man, and quickly followed by the hardy pioneer, who gains his bread in the distant wilds; and thus they have been driven from station to station, until the mighty Andes are scarcely a limit to their wanderings, and protect them from the devouring contact with the vices of civilized life. Extermination and an utter obliterating almost have thus been the fate of many tribes of the once powerful owners of this land, for whom we cannot avoid feeling pity, though they have often been stained with the blood of many innocent victims; knowing, as we do, that their untutored mind was not rarely goaded on to madness by the bad faith and rapacity of their more lettered, but frequently dishonest neighbours, who came at times, first, to seek a refuge and shelter in the to them hospitable forest, and then aimed ere long to dispossess their kind red friends of the graves of their forefathers. But these yielded not without a terrible resistance, and many a glade was reddened by the blood of mortal foes, of rival races struggling for the supremacy; and amidst such scenes the youth we spoke of distinguished himself, escaping with life where death enfolded many in his cold embrace, and he was thus spared to become the chief and the great man who has so lately fallen.

The war was ended, and the young soldier resigned the sword which had not been ingloriously drawn; and honoured by the wise man who then governed the state, he received a more peaceful appointment in the newly-conquered territory. Anon he rose to the chief rule of the land for which he had fought, and acquired by his prudence and faithfulness the affection of the grateful inhabitants. And when the newly-awakened demon of war again roused the savages to strife and slaughter, he led the armies of his country to the onset, and overthrew the dangerous foe. And when, soon after, the island-king was declared the enemy of these States, the time-honoured soldier did not seek repose from danger; but he marched where the contest raged fierce and hot: the leaguer, and camp, and battle-field tell truly where fought and directed the hero who since then became the great man for whom the nation now mourns.

Peace again shed her blessings over city and field, and the men of war sheathed their swords, and returned to the bosom of their own beloved household. No longer was heard the roar of the dread artillery, and the mariners again spread their sails to seek the pursuits of commerce in far-off oceans, and they, who had lately mixed only in the fierce encounter, again grasped each other's hand in friendship and union; and he, who had so lately wielded the weapon of destruction, was sent on to the mètropolis in the peaceful guise of the representative of the people, to share in the deliberation of measures best calculated to perpetuate the liberties and rights which had been dearly purchased and gloriously maintained. There we find him for many years pursuing the even tenor of his way, uncorrupted and honest in the discharge of his duties; and when he was at length raised to take his seat among the assembly of the ancients who are appointed to mature what their coadjutors have perhaps rashly proposed, the same integrity of purpose was manifested by the patriot; and if even all his acts in the capacity of legislator may not meet with universal approbation, no one will deny him the just claim of having followed the dictates of a conscience never burdened with the charge of having promoted his private ends to the injury of his public trusts. And he deserves therefore the title of a great and good man, who merits the regrets of his grateful countrymen.

Roused by the oppression of ancient Spain, and fired by the example set them in this republic, the people of the southern portion of this continent resolved to be free; and nobly they strained every nerve, and finally succeeded (so willed Providence), in casting out the legions of the parent state, a country which is loaded with guilt, and rapine, and slaughter, from every part of this hemisphere; and they thus established themselves as independent communities. The prominence which was attached to General Harrison caused the then President, Adams, to send him ambassador to the Republic of Colombia, over which was then placed that remarkable man—remarkable and great despite of his faults—the Liberator, Simon Bolivar. Party considerations induced Mr. Adams's successor to recall the patriot soldier before he had an opportunity of effecting much in the furtherance of his mission; and having thus returned to his native land, he settled down in retirement near the scenes of his early achievements, where in a few years had sprung up a city second to few in commerce and enterprise. And here the man who had been a general, governor, representative, senator, and ambassador, and who had received the thanks of Congress for his bravery and skill, did not disdain to resort to a comparatively humble calling to acquire an honourable competency in his old age, by taking a respectable though subordinate station in one of the courts of law near his domicil, where he lived in liberal, though unostentatious hospitality. Many anecdotes are related of his goodness of heart, and the frank openness of his manners; it is needless, however, to dwell upon them now, especially as no doubt those who knew him well will before long present them to the public in an authentic shape; enough for our purpose that a large portion of his countrymen, believing the measures pursued by the executive of the Union injurious to the general welfare, singled him out as the person who could remedy the defects which they deplored. The first attempt, owing doubtless to the want of proper harmony and union, failed, and his rival was elevated to the highest dignity under the laws, and he had thus to yield for a time to a man who, whatever the light be in which difference of party may view him, is yet deserving of the especial gratitude of all Jews for the active part he took upon a recent occasion to have justice extended to the oppresssed sons of Israel in the Ottoman dominions. But not disheartened by the first failure, General Harrison was again nominated for the presidency; and within a few months past the free and unbought suffrage of a free and independent people declared him by a triumphant vote to be the man called to administer the government for the space of four years, the longest term which the laws allow at one election. I need not tell you how his success was hailed as the guarantee of better times and returning prosperity; nor is it requisite to call your attention to the astonishing fact, how the party so long in power, and who contended so violently for the victory, quietly submitted to the popular will, as soon as it was ascertained that a majority had decreed a change of rulers; thus evidencing that the greatest liberty, even amounting to a revolutionizing of the whole system of government in many essential particulars, can be and is compatible with the utmost security, and can be and is effected without bloodshed and a disruption of the civil compact.

But we must hasten to the final scene. The newly elected President travelled from his distant home to assume the reins of government, and his progress equalled, nay surpassed, the triumphal procession of a mighty conqueror; and wherever he appeared crowds flocked to greet him and to do honour to the man whom their own choice had raised. And it is but one brief month since he appeared, according to the laws of the land, before its representatives and chief judge, in the presence of assembled thousands to swear true allegiance and faithfulness in the execution of the high trust reposed in him; and the multitude shouted—the cannon's roar loudly yet peacefully announced the event—the flags of the stripes and stars were gaily thrown out to the breeze—and millions anxiously watched for the message from the ancient patriot that was to announce to them the measures he meant to pursue. Yes, there were throngs in the streets of the capital city; there were crowds on the roads of persons vainly eager to hasten onward to behold the exciting spectacle; there were many anxious to know whether in the distribution of public favours their claims would be regarded, and there were many others intent only to behold their country's favoured and illustrious son.—And he, the object of all this excitement, seemed to feel himself but little elated, and continued to exhibit the same frankness and kind urbanity which had characterized him in a private station. Those who had hoped much from his elevation hailed with joy the summons he extended to the councillors of the people to meet him in two months' time to deliberate over the national welfare. But scarce had as many weeks elapsed when intelligence of his illness was wafted over the land, and a few days more rolled on when, after deceptive appearances of amendment in his disorder had been announced, the melancholy and startling tidings were scattered abroad that the President of these States had been summoned away to a better world, and that the heart which so lately throbbed with thoughts of high resolve had ceased to beat, and that the spirit which had animated and prompted him to noble actions had taken its flight to the God who gave it. And now the land is filled with sorrow and regret, and the cannon booms in solemn sounds of woe, and the flags are hung out enshrouded with signs of mourning, and the chamber of death is crowded with silent spectators, and hushed is the tumult of assembled thousands, who meet to honour truly by their silence the departed chief who now sleeps undisturbed by passions and anxious care. And in the distant home sits perhaps alone the beloved wife, anxiously awaiting the summons of her lord to share with him the splendour of the national palace; but this summons comes not, for he, whom she loved, is no more, and in the place of joyful tidings the messenger of evil must needs reveal to her the truth that afflicts so many; and may the great Creator in his mercy inspire her with fortitude to bear with humble resignation the blow which has been struck against her peace, and may she receive consolation as was given always to those who trusted in the Lord and confided in his goodness. And may the deceased meet the reward destined unto virtue, and may his soul repose in peace amid the righteous of Israel, who enjoy the happiness which the Lord has destined for those who place in Him their hopes of salvation. —And we are justified in believing that the man, who in the moment of his elevation forgot not his Creator, but endeavoured to serve Him (as report says) after the manner which he had been early taught was the accepted mode of worship, though this is not the truth which is the portion of Jacob's congregation, will have been received ere our prayers ascend for him this day in the favour and the presence of the Lord of life, and that his sins have been forgiven even according to the mercy and loving kindness of the Holy One of Israel. And well may now the country mourn, from the cold and bleak hills of the far north and where it borders upon Britain's wide domain, to where a southern sky sheds a bright warmth over a soil laden with tropical products, for the venerable departed who in his last moments and by his last words testified his anxiety for the land he had been called on to rule over; since no matter what may have been shades of difference in opinion entertained concerning him and his proposed measures, none will now deny him an honesty of purpose and a purity of heart, and all will join in the words of our text, "Know ye not that a chief and a great man hath fallen this day in Israel."

In the brief sketch we have just furnished of the life and services of General Harrison, it will be perceived that he passed through every stage of promotion, and that he rose from an humble standard-bearer to the chief command of the army and navy, and the presidency of the councils of his native land; and he thus reached a station as high as human ambition can look for; because the voluntary suffrage of a free people raising one of their own fellow-citizens to the highest honour within their gift, is a far more enviable distinction than a throne inherited by a stripling from a royal ancestry, or acquired through violence by an adventurous military chieftain. We have therefore a lesson that virtue and moderation, joined to a straightforward line of conduct, are well calculated and will pre-eminently conduce to acquire for us the favour of God and man, and thereby secure to us the desires even of a worldly ambition to a far greater extent than trick and cunning on the one, or violence, though coupled with skill and energy, on the other side; for if even by the last methods temporary success may be obtained, still such success will fail to produce inward peace, and to secure the love and good-will of the wise and virtuous.

But another lesson, and one not less impressive, is derived from the briefness of the period in which the late President enjoyed his high rank, and the suddenness of his removal by the hand of death. The shout that accompanied his accession to power yet reverberates through the land, when the air is loaded with the sound of wailing over his unexpected decease. And whilst the words of flattery which the crowd always offer at the foot of power have not yet died away, his ears have become deaf to the clang of trumpets; to the measured tramp of the war-steed; to the rattle of the muffled drum; the tolling of the funeral bell; and the firing of the artillery, which accompany him to the home destined for all the living. In the prerogative invested in him by the laws of the land, he summons round him the councillors and the elders of the nation; but ere the command has reached them, he who bid them come can feel no more the cares of state, and is borne away to the tomb, and over him is piled the dust from which his body sprung; and he must leave to another hand the task of carrying out the work which he would gladly have executed himself, had life and health been given.

Say, mortal! dost thou not feel rebuked at the state of uncertainty which thus is proven to hang around all thy steps? Thou plannest, thou ordainest, thou biddest, art chafed if aught displease thee, if aught contradict thee; but seest thou not how soon all thy mighty resolves may be arrested, and all thy toiling rendered as naught? And yet thou clingest to earth and its greatness, its sweets, its allurements, its wealth, as though thy abiding-place were here for ever! Thou valuest not the life everlasting and its joys, its pleasures and its holiness. Thou numberest those hours as bright in which thou hast laboured to elevate thyself above thy fellows, and thinkest those minutes lost in which thou heldest communion with thy Creator, and didst learn to humble thyself, as becomes the weak and sinful worm before Him who is holy, pure, and great. Alas! alas! that this should be our striving, that thus we suffer our days to pass in vain desires, and in actions by which we are more closely drawn to a perishable world, forgetful of the end that must come much sooner than we anticipate. But would it not be wise, brethren, so to act as though every day were our last? to number our days by the happiness of the inward spirit which delights only in virtue, in truth, in justice, in the love of the great Supreme? Surely far more enviable is the man who is rich in these, and far happier must he be than the man who builds his house in iniquity, and fills his coffers by acts of injustice. Yet, we envy not the righteous man for his righteousness, nor the humble in religious hope for the serenity of his mind; and why? because we know not thoroughly, because we wish not to feel in truth the happiness of religious wealth, and the enduringness of spiritual hopes. Could we but be made alive to them, how speedily would we hasten to make ourselves worthy of their attainment; how soon would we purchase them in preference to the merchandise of silver or the fragrance of precious oils. But let us be wise; let us hear the warning voice which speaks from the crumbling rock, from the smouldering pile, from moss-covered ruins, from the autumnal forest, and from a hero's dying bed, that life is short, and its joys are fleeting: in order that we may be impressed with the obligation which our blessed law imposes on us to become holy and pure, through obedience and repentance according to the revealed word of God; so that we may be accounted worthy in his presence, and be admitted to the portals of everlasting happiness! Amen.

And now, O Lord our God! we beseech thee to shed thy grace over all the sons of man, and purify them by a knowledge of thy holy word, even through the blessed messenger whom Thou wilt send to bring comfort and hope to every living soul; and hasten speedily the time when Thou wilt open the graves of thy people and restore them to a life without ending. Amen.

Nissan 18th. } 5601.
April 9th. }

DISCOURSE IV.

JUSTICE, TRUTH, AND PEACE.*

O Lord our God! whose name is powerful over all the earth! we have entered thy house overwhelmed by a sense of thy unending greatness, and humbled by a feeling of our entire dependence on thy will. It was but lately that the inhabitants of this land called one from among them to go out and to come in before their armies, and to make his voice heard in their councils. They looked with satisfaction upon the work they had accomplished, and perhaps worshipped the creature more than thy majesty, imagining that human aid should help them. But lo! thy command went forth, and him they had chosen Thou willedst to take from among the living, whilst but one change of the moon had passed over his greatness. And then thy angel sped forth, and brought his spirit before thy throne, to be judged of Thee, the great and Almighty Ruler and Judge, who regardest alike the exalted, and those who are cast down even to the dunghill. And how many who peradventure never thought that thy providence rules the nations, have acknowledged thy power, and they come to humble themselves in spirit, and to crave thy blessed protection. O! do Thou teach all such and those who ere this walked before Thee, to feel that they are entirely depending on Thee, and that without thy aid their life must be vanity, their days as nothing, and their strivings of no avail. Fill them thus with humility, that they may subdue the evil of their hearts, and learn to be like Thee, just and merciful, regardful alike of the claims their fellow-men have on their justice and bounty, and forgiving to those who have offended them. And O may it be thy will, that the afflictive event, which Thou didst cause to happen, may have a permanent effect upon us all, and induce us to learn obedience betimes, while life and health are yet ours by thy dispensation; so that, when the hour of our separation from earth does arrive, we may be able to meet Thee joyfully as our approving Father, and our benignant Judge, while Thou wilt receive us into thy paternal embrace. Amen.

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* This address was delivered on the day of public fasting and humiliation, proclaimed by President John Tyler in consequence of the decease of his predecessor.

BRETHREN!

The acting President of the republic, in view of the unexpected demise of the late chief magistrate, recognizing in this event the finger of Providence, has requested the people all over the country to observe this day, each persuasion after their own manner, as a day of fasting, prayer, and humiliation. It is in accordance with this recommendation, that we have also repaired to the house of God, to mingle with the other citizens in the well-timed exercise of pious rites. I say well-timed; for is not an occasion like the one which we have just witnessed, and which has summoned us hither, well calculated to fix our attention on the greatness of God, and to point out to us emphatically, our own insignificance? It was but lately, that millions of men willed to select one of their number to be their chief; but the Lord willed that the mighty man and the counsellor should strive on earth no longer, and now he sleeps the sleep of death, and another is left the heir of all his honours and power. What availed it to the deceased that he had been called from his peaceful home to assume the cares of state, what advantage was it that so many looked up to him with hope and confidence, what mattered it that so many, skilful in the healing art, watched around his bedside? the angel of death had been sent on his mission, and he returned not till his errand had been fulfilled, and till all the anxiety, care, hope and labour had been exhausted in vain. Thus the striving of man and his confidence in his own power have been again proved before our eyes to be unavailing, when contending with the Lord of life, whose we are and to whom we must render an account of our deeds. Where then should we, frail and mortal, look for support? where should we place our trust? Shall it be in those who have power? wealth? wisdom? renown? Shall we cling to power? to riches? to worldly wisdom? to fame? Shall we pursue the course of conduct which selfishness dictates, smile when cities blaze, shut our eyes to the sight of suffering, turn a deaf ear to the appeals of the distressed, and steel our hearts to the dictates of justice? In short, shall we trust in human means, pursue worldly things, and live only for ourselves? O no! this would not be wise; we thus should not profit in the least by the admonition of Providence so recently vouchsafed to us; and the wound which has been struck would not conduce toward the healing of the spirit, of which we all stand so much in need. No, brethren! it is vain to rely on man, even the most powerful and the wisest, for all are alike mortal, and unable to assist us in the hour of dissolution; since no human power and wisdom can afford us help beyond the grave. But upon Him who is everlasting, whose power is not limited by time and space, whose wisdom is unclouded by human frailties and ignorance of ultimate results, we should cast our hopes, our trust, and if we rely on Him, we shall then be truly sheltered, yes sheltered and secure even when death is near. And thou, suffering brother! who art oppressed by the powerful and proud, whose head is bowed before those who fear not the Creator, who art banished from thy home an exile and outcast on the wide world by the action of those who feel no pity, think not that there is none to help thee; man may frown, but there is One who nevertheless can assist thee; only be firm and of good courage, and doubt not of the goodness of God, because thou art for a time compelled to suffer wrong and contumely; but cheered by the consciousness that thy God, who will not mete out to thee greater trials than thou canst bear, does watch over thee and number all thy steps, persevere in the path of righteousness which thou hast hitherto pursued. And if even thy sufferings should not be removed, and want and penury be thy portion, thou wilt have within thee a light which will illumine the darkness of the spirit, and banish the corroding thought of utter forsakenness which the unkind deeds of mortals may have aroused within thy bosom; for thou wilt then know that thy Redeemer liveth, and that

He will smile approvingly upon the soul of the unswerving servant, when thy body has been surrendered to corruption.

Yes, truly this is the portion of the righteous, who though they suffer, though men are their enemies, have the consciousness that the great God is their friend, who will not permit them to endure more than is conducive to their improvement, and which is beyond their means of bearing. And their sorrows which dim not the light of their virtue will be a holy example to others around them, and will tell more loudly than words, that they who trust in God are well secured, and that tribulations when borne with meekness are truly the way of life and everlasting happiness.

And those who are powerful and wise themselves, the rich and renowned, have not they a right to boast of their possessions, and to look with something like pride upon those less favoured? shall they not have some cause to regard themselves as born to command? Alas! how vain are these advantages; but a brief period will elapse when power will vanish; nay, if it even abide with a man till the day of his death, as was the case with the late President: yet how soon will this day arrive, how soon will the body, bereft of soul, return to inert clay. And who will then do homage to the mouldering dust? who will fear the frowns of the quenched eye, or dread the sound of the tongue that is now hushed, and wish to influence by flattery the heart that now beats no more? Even let us suppose that a mighty nation should weep for a fallen chief, that millions should mourn because the power so well used is wielded no longer by the trusty hands: what does that avail the body which is insensible alike to praise or blame?—And yet man shall trust in the delegated authority which is his for a brief space? forget his Creator, because he can for a time bear rule over others? despise his fellow-creatures who are humble? forget in his exaltation the end that to him too is fast approaching? O vanity of vanities! for inglorious indeed will be that end, unblessed that memory where the possessor of power valued himself because he had attained it, and loved his species less, because he was raised on high, or worshipped not his Maker with due fervour, because other men were subject to his rule.

The wise man thinks perchance that he is of more consequence than the rest of mankind, and that he should be exempt from the fate of humanity, labour and mutual dependence on others. But is this just? can any knowledge we possess raise us above the level of mankind? Go then, vain boaster, who despisest thy neighbour because thou art wise:—who gave thee wisdom? who filled thy tongue with eloquence? was it not thy Creator? and why was this wisdom given? was it not that thou mightest be an instructor to others, a guide to those less favoured than thyself? But what at last is thy wisdom? thou standest but on the shore of the great ocean of knowledge and truth, a pebble perchance, picked up amidst the mountains of sand against which the waters dash, may fall to thy share, whilst the depth profound, the distance unapproachable, are entirely shut out from thy aching sight. Yes, stretch thy vision, as does the astronomer armed with the telescope of science into the depth of the starry heaven, and thou wilt find systems after systems, worlds upon worlds, yet stretching far away beyond thy view. Even thy own existence must ever remain a mystery to thyself; and how the plants vegetate, how the beasts grow to maturity, how the inanimate reagents, subject as they are to thy will, accomplish their mighty errands, how the heat of bodies, their attractive power, their repulsion, do act and counteract in one continued circle of ceaseless activity, all, all will ever be hidden from thy ken. The results alone thou canst know; but the causes are not more invisible to thy eyes than they are concealed from the reach of thy mind. Besides this, how many facts can thy mind treasure up? and if once acquired, will they not constantly escape from thy memory? Let but one attack of severe disease rack thy frame, and thy stores of knowledge vanish, memory will be weakened, judgment will become confused, the melodious voice will be rendered harsh, and the quick perception of similarities and differences between various subjects will be destroyed. Why then shouldst thou rely so much on thy wisdom, and power of mind, and eloquence which thou enjoyest above others, when a casualty which may be of daily occurrence will level thee with the common crowd?

But says the man of wealth, "By my labours and industry I have acquired power; many there are who wait at my door to receive the largesses of my bounty; my money causes the splendid bark to be built and to unfurl her magnificent wings to every breeze on every ocean; fields are cultivated by means of my capital, lands are reclaimed through me from the forest and the ocean, and rendered healthy and inhabitable by my interposing; at my bidding, a thousand mechanics snatch up the tools of their handicraft, and houses, and palaces, and temples spring up speedily as if by magic; schools are endowed by my superabundant wealth, and after-ages will know, perhaps bless, my name as that of their benefactor. Why should I not be honoured? why should I mingle with the mass, who depend upon me for their daily support? why should I not make myself felt by those who without me would want for bread?"—These are the thoughts of the man who confides in his wealth, who conceives himself raised above divine assistance by his hoards of gold and precious stones. But, boaster! all thy thoughts are deceit and vanity! for thy wealth will not avail thee when death knocks at the door of thy palace, the crowd of servants, the heaps of costly ornaments, the array of numerous houses, the accumulated treasures of art which thy riches have purchased will not arrest thy end for one moment even. And if thou hast been harsh and unkind in thy conduct to those around thee, thou wilt vainly sigh for the unpurchased hand of kindness to smooth the pillow of thy couch of suffering, or to wipe away with tender care the clammy drops of approaching dissolution. And if thou hast forgotten thy Creator in the hour of health, if then thou didst deem thy wealth more to be prized than his favour: how will thy conscience be racked by the dread of meeting unprepared the august Judge, while cry against thee for vengeance the widow and the orphan, whose property thou hast perchance unlawfully retained, or the stranger who, deceived by thy apparent respectability, put his trust in thee. O! such a death will be awful, terrible to endure, and frightful to contemplate. But why wilt thou not at once mingle the enjoyment of thy riches with spiritual improvement, and humility and meekness to the Creator, and charity and good-will to men? Thou art wealthy: the more therefore art thou able to be a father to the orphan and a support to the widow. Thou hast gold more than needful for thy wants: the more art thou empowered to succour the needy stranger, and to pour oil in the wounds of the afflicted, and to open the prison-doors of those whom avarice and oppression have consigned to personal restraint, to weep in solitude within narrow walls over the cruelty and selfishness of a fellow-mortal. Thou art feared and courted, because of thy ample means; the more art thou able to influence others to pursue righteousness and truth, by showing them in thy own example how the man envied for his vast possessions is yet humble before the Giver of all, by whose aid his labours have been blessed, and productiveness has been granted to the work of his hands.

The man of martial renown, whose name is borne afar on the wings of fame, of whom the aged speak with delight, and youth inquire about with eager looks and greedy curiosity, who deems that he bears a charmed life, seeing that the arrow harmed him not when he stood unscathed amidst the dying and the dead on the field where contending nations strove for victory; whom the floods did not overpower when he carried his country's thunder into distant oceans, when but few survived the wreck or the murderous sea-fight: should he not justly think himself superior to other men? should he not be entitled to regard himself as beyond the necessity of asking divine assistance? O no! for he too is mortal, and he too has perhaps been the means in the hands of Providence to effect some mighty change of which the age stood in need; but independent of God he is not; and when his hour of trial comes, he will feel himself as weak, as helpless as the thousands of those over whose prostrate forms he urged his fiery steed, unmoved like himself by the havoc the deadly missiles and the flashing swords had wrought; and like the wounded soldier, who vainly cries out for water on the bloody plain where no kind hand is near to offer the cooling element to refresh, if it be but for one moment, the parched lips ere they are closed for ever, he will, when too late, cry out for the water of salvation, which in his pride and presumption he foolishly rejected in the moments of health and confidence in his strength. But would he also not be wise were he to cast himself on the Lord of life in the hour of success and triumph? would he not promote his own happiness were he to consecrate his sword to Heaven, and never draw it but in a just cause, and look upon the Arbiter of nations as the Power to whom he too is accountable? O then will the warrior's laurels be green for ever, and at his decease ministering angels will wreathe around his brow garlands of virtuous deeds which will never fade, which will bloom not alone on earth on the bright page of history as examples to other mortals, but which will also adorn the pious servant of the Lord before the throne of Grace to the utmost length of time.

In this manner should all humble themselves before the Lord, be they called to power, endowed with wisdom, possessed of wealth, or blessed with an undying name; and if all of these do pursue this course, their own happiness and inward peace will not be less promoted, than the comfort and prosperity of all around them. But let us well understand that no acts of piety will avail us, while our conduct towards our fellows savours of harshness and injustice; the Creator cannot be served, whilst his children are oppressed. Can we then be justified to speak of our love to God, while we rejoice in the misfortunes of our neighbour? while we are callous to the duties of humanity? while we oppress those over whom we have power? while we aim to establish our own will regardless of the just remonstrances of others? while we stand unmoved at the calls of justice, simply because we will not forego an opinion once formed, no matter if the cruelty of our resolve be ever so apparent? O no! this is not the way of life; this is not the path of salvation. But listen, brethren! to the voice of God as made known through his messenger:

אלה הדברים אשר תעשו דברו אמת איש את רעהו
אמת ומשפט שלום שפטו בשעריכם : ואיש את רעת
רעהו אל תחשבו בלבבכם ושבעת שקר אל תאהבו
כי את כל אלה אשר שנאתי נאם ה׳ : זכר׳ ח׳ טז׳ יז׳ :

"These are the things that ye shall do, Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour, the truth and judgment of peace judge ye in your gates; and let none of you imagine evil in your heart against his neighbour, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." Zechariah viii. 16, 17.

In this emphatic passage we have an indication of what is the will of God in regard of the conduct from man to man. The first is, we are ordered to speak the strictest truth to one another. There is a great fault, not rare among many, to speak as much truth only as suits their purpose and to conceal whatever might be hurtful to their interest. Many evils actually result from such a course. The confiding and generous are very frequently misled by this half-way truth; they believe themselves in the possession of facts upon which to act; they do not imagine that their friends would mislead them: when lo! in the hour of trial, they find that they were deceived, not by what their timid friends had told, but by what they had carefully concealed. But such truth is not speaking the truth, it is deception under the guise of truth. Therefore, says the prophet: "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour;" in this important matter let it be as with neighbourly love, not to do that to another which would be disagreeable to yourselves. Now imagine for once that your neighbour were to serve you so meanly as to conceal in his communication an important part of the matter which to know is of vital importance to you. What would you think of his baseness? yet even as you expect of him, act on your part, speak the truth plainly, fearlessly, and without disguise, so that your neighbour may not be misled by the information which you impart to him.

Then continues the prophet: "The truth and the judgment of peace judge ye in your gates." You no doubt know that the word "gates" in Scriptures is equivalent to our term "courts of justice," since in the days of our commonwealth the gates, the places of the greatest resort, were the spots selected for the assemblies of the people and elders. So then the judges, or all those whose province it may be to sit in judgment, are admonished to judge first "the truth," and secondly "the judgment of peace." When a case, no matter what its character, comes before you, it is your solemn obligation to search well your heart, whether deceit be not lurking there under the mask of inexorable justice. Dwell with care upon the issue before you, and see that the cause of truth be truly served by your honest verdict made up by the removal of prejudice to the utmost extent in your power. And in deciding, it is also requisite that you should turn a deaf ear to the special pleading of artful mystifiers who, by the plausible show of words, may cast the truth in the shade, and exhibit the innocent in the light of an offender; but do not act in this way, judge truth, the truth only, stripped of all web of ingenious sophistry, in candour and sincerity, even as you hope in your dying hour to receive mercy and truth from your Maker. Yet not alone truth should be your guide, but peace likewise. O blessed peace! which in countries and communities, and large cities, and single households, art the harbinger of happiness and content! come thou down from heaven, from the presence of the Lord of peace, and dwell in the midst of us, to restore harmony where there is contention, and spread contentment where thou already dwellest.—Yes, brethren! peace is this beautifying principle which is to govern you in your decisions upon all occasions and at all times; always lean to the side of amity and brotherly love; and sooner than let strife go to the extremity of power, and justice be done to the injury of many, let compromise of good-will be thrown into the scales, so that both parties be left to dwell together in peace, sooner than the one should needlessly triumph in an absolute conquest, and the other's mind rankle under the idea of suffering from too harsh a decision, though this decision be strictly just.—Let it be your study through life to lean on the side of mercy; for this, when well-timed, will heal wounds, and bring harmony, where otherwise discord might break asunder the bonds of friendship which formerly seemed to unite men, as though it were one spirit that dwelt in different bodies.

We are farther told, "That we are not to imagine evil in our hearts against our neighbour." How requisite is this injunction! how much happier world we all be, were we to abide by this holy advice proceeding from the highest Source of Wisdom. What do we not impute to our neighbour? An act of the most trifling kind, a word spoken hastily, an expression not clearly understood dropped in the heat of argument, are seized upon by malevolence and tortured into grave offences; and then witness the means used to execute vengeance upon the unhappy culprit, especially if the offender be one on whom we can freely wreak our ill-will. But how much would human happiness be promoted, were we to look upon the favourable side of every question. Suppose I am offended at a remark made by any one of my neighbours, and grant that I am not mistaken in my information: is it not possible that I may have given the first cause for offence? that my pride, my own inconsiderate folly may have provoked the injury? Surely, humanity is so liable to err, that daily experience proves that many honest persons are thus constantly taking offence, where either no offence was meant, or where the offence was the result of our own previously committed wrong. Shall we now, brethren! on this day resolve over, so to say, the ashes of the late chief of this land, to endeavour to bear and forbear with the faults and foibles of each other? Shall we not mutually forgive and forget injuries? and start anew in the race of brotherly love? shall we henceforward be ready to think well over the faults inherent to human nature to which we are all liable, and to which the best of us not rarely yield in moments of weakness and excitement?—Yes, let us listen to the words of God, which are so beautiful an exemplification of his goodness and care, inasmuch as He designed through his prophets to hold up the mirror to nature, and to cause us to see our own image in the words, in which He vouchsafed to declare to us his will and instruction.

Having thus exhorted his hearers to truth-speaking, truth-judging, restoring of peace, and thinking kindly of another, the holy seër concludes by admonishing the people against every species of false swearing. Many, alas! many more than we would suspect, are guilty of this sin. They assert with an air of confidence and sincerity as positively true that of which they know but little, and impose upon the credulity of the unsuspecting by their apparent candour. It is indeed lamentable that the words of ordinary conversation only too much favour this species of deception, and that there exists a great readiness to accommodate ourselves to the abuse of terms though slightly inconsistent with truth. The more therefore is there need that we do not allow ourselves to be led away to utter falsehood, least of all to grow careless in the use of oaths to asseverate to the truth of things which are at best doubtful in their nature. And still many are not rarely led astray by the habit they observe in others, to employ a degree of looseness in expressions which are hardly fitting if applied to truth; and they not unfrequently cause an injury to others' interests and reputation by the levity with which a common rumour is set down as a fact, as though it were well ascertained and undeniable. All this, however, is wrong; we are prohibited from sporting with falsehood, even if it be for mere sport; we ourselves may know that we are jesting, but a third person may innocently believe us to be in earnest, and thus falsehood may be scattered by our instrumentality, and thus wound a heart unsullied and pure, which we would gladly protect from injury at the expense of our life even. And adds the Text: "For all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." Our God is so holy and pure, so true and faithful, that any deviation from truth, justice, and the way of peace is an abomination in his sight, and we cannot expect ever to enter his presence, if we do not love our fellow-men, and deal with them in honour, truth, faith, and kindness. But let not our obduracy, the fear of yielding before the eyes of a frivolous, fault-finding world, counsel us to persevere in a wrong which we have meditated, in an injury which we have resolved on against our brother. Who asks this duty of us? is it not our Maker? and have we not come hither to acknowledge his great power, and to humble ourselves before Him? And shall we hesitate, fear to yield because we dread the taunts of vain men, frail like ourselves, and, perhaps, more than we, steeped in sin and iniquity? and for what? to perpetrate a wrong which may ultimately not injure those whom we threaten, and revert upon ourselves like a rolling stone which returns upon the head of the one that rolled it forward? But let us take wiser counsel from the book which teaches us where is the source of life; in order that much good may result from our labours on earth, and truth, justice, peace, and love accompany us as guardian angels unto the footstool of the throne of Mercy!

And now, O Lord our God, who didst bring forth our forefathers from Egypt with a mighty hand! we have sinned before Thee, and followed the evil inclination of our hearts, in that we have forsaken thy commandments, and oppressed one another in disobedience to thy will. It is therefore that thy wrath has in justice been poured out over us, and that when we hoped for light there was darkness, and that terror came where we looked for peace. But, Father of mercy! it is thy wont to pardon and to withhold thy anger from the children of thy creation; for Thou art God and not man, and desirest only the improvement of the works of thy hand by a display of thy power. Be it therefore thy will to deal beneficently with us and all Israel our brethren, and spread the pavilion of peace over us, and cause that in this community of Israelites especially, for whom we pray, there may ever be found harmony and a spirit of mutual forbearance, so that all our acts may redound to our own happiness and the promotion of the reign of thy law over our hearts and spirits.—Over the remnant of Israel, wherever they are, hold out thy protecting arm, and save them and shield them, so that they may remain entire and undisturbed, living for thy glory, and being a light to the nations of the earth.—But upon the stranger who is not of thy people Israel, especially on this city in which we dwell, and this extensive land in which our lot is cast, shed thy blessing and care, that many, who now know not thy name, may, like Naäman of old, be brought to worship no god save Thee alone, the Father from everlasting, the King and Lord of the universe. And let the event, which has so strikingly proved thy power, and has brought us hither on this day to humble ourselves in thy presence, impress itself deeply on the minds of all the inhabitants of this land, so that all may truly see that it is thy hand that has done it, in order that they all may rend their spirit in thy presence, like the men of ancient Nineveh, and acknowledge thy power, and greatness, and glory, that it may be well with them and their children after them, and that they all may be turned to seek thy favour by pursuing truth, mercy and righteousness in which Thou delightest.—And do Thou in thy goodness visit the ruins of Zion, the city of our glory, and send speedily the redeemer to feed us there upon our own inheritance as the children of thy love and care. Amen.

Iyar 23d. } 5601.
May 14th. }

DISCOURSE V.

THE DIVINE KINGDOM.

Brethren!

Among the blessings which we are promised at the coming of the Messiah, we find the following announcement, as delivered to us in the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah v. 9:

והיה ה׳ למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה׳
אחד ושמו אחד ׃ זכר״ה יד׳ ט׳ ׃

"And the Lord shall be the King over all the earth; on that day there shall be the Lord ONE, and his name shall be one."

Among the causes which withdraw man from the service of his Maker are prominent want of faith and want of knowledge. We constantly transgress, because we have not yet confidence in divine assistance and a belief in God's superintendence, or because we are not sufficiently familiar with divine things, which knowledge it is that is to place us above the temptations of every-day life. Yet suppose even that we are duly familiar with our duties, that from our very infancy it has been the practice of our parents to point out to us the way we should go, and that in riper years we have applied ourselves diligently to a study which is so rich in blessed fruits: what is it that often renders us children of wrath by the pursuit of sin?

Yet if we cast a look into our own heart, we shall discover that the Lord does not reign alone there, but that his place is supplied by the lust for pleasure, or desire for wealth, the fear of the world, the cravings of ambition, the hatred of our fellow-men, or perhaps of that thrice accursed love of ease which despises labour, and seeks its own gratification at the hazard of injuring the immortal spirit by polluting it with transgressions against our neighbour's rights and possessions. We are told, and every thing around us assures us of its being so, that God rewards and punishes the deeds of his creatures; but we have not that universal all-pervading feeling of adoration which will enable us to acknowledge Him the sole adorable ONE; for we have often within us, strange though it be, a love of God overshadowed by a desire for unsubstantial, fleeting things, not inaptly called the goods of this earth; for when we cease to be indwellers of this sphere, or when our spirit has severed its mysterious connexion with the material body, all the gifts which were valuable and prized in our mixed state of being are left behind as appertaining to the earth and its inhabitants. O! then does the man of power cast off his purple as an heir-loom for other shoulders; then does the man of war not wield any more his martial baton; other hands than the former owner clutch the much-desired gold; and broad lands and fertile domains welcome the young possessor who will lavish perhaps the hard earnings of his penurious predecessor. And it is the desire after such treasures or the pleasures and gratifications which they bring, which drive out of our heart the love which we naturally feel for our supreme Benefactor: I say naturally feel, for lost indeed must be that spirit which, amidst the throng of evils which surround it, does not occasionally glow with gratefulness and awe for the Author of its existence. But the multitude of mankind are almost exclusively alive to the advantages which wealth, power and pleasure afford; they see tangibly before them, that the man who is blessed with riches can live at ease, and command the smiles no less than the services of both equals and inferiors; that he who has authority conferred upon him is envied and courted, because of the influence he exercises over the affairs of his country, or for the favours he can bestow; and there is scarcely a single individual who does not endeavour to enjoy life in all the varieties of satisfaction which he may deem attainable, and to avoid all the hardships, labours and sorrows which, he fancies, may embitter the brief hours which are allotted to him here below. If therefore our faith is not strong, if we have not so far learned to place a proper value upon earthly things, as to postpone these to the favour of the Lord: it is evidently to be expected that transgressions will be the natural result, inasmuch as such a course will bring us, according to our worldly views, nearer to the things we so highly prize.

Thus much may be said of transgression when the cause is want of faith, where nevertheless a knowledge of religion has been imparted to the sinner. But suppose that we are unacquainted with our duties, that our days have been spent in the vain pursuits of worldliness, without any appreciation of the blessings flowing out of the word of God:—what can you expect, but that every deed almost, done under the influence of such deplorable ignorance, will be in contravention of the law of God? For the want of proper information will be the cause, that the person who is about to act will not be able to judge correctly between the right which should be practised, and the wrong which ought to be avoided; and hence it is not to be presumed that he will forego the apparent advantages of absolute gain for the remote and unseen benefits resulting from a course of godliness.

Whilst now the above two causes are as active in their operation in the affairs of mankind, as we actually find them at this day, it is natural that we should expect a great mass of sin and corruption. Man's heart is prone to evil; from his infancy he is drawn to iniquity, and the goods and pleasures of life seem to him to be the objects the most to be desired during the course of his earthly pilgrimage. If therefore we turn to the history of the world from its very beginning we shall discover that, though at the very commencement of the creation man was informed of the will of his God, he was yet led away by sensuality to transgress the command which he had received. But, because he was forewarned, he justly incurred the wrath meet for his transgression, and he was banished from the garden of delight to till in sorrow and toil the ground from which his body was taken. So you see that, because our first father valued the advantage of sensual life beyond the favour of God, or in other words, because he had not sufficient faith, trust or confidence in his Maker, he voluntarily chose that which he had been told was sinful and odious to Him from whom he had received his being; and he fell from a state of innocence into one of shame and degradation, where he could only hope to obtain forgiveness and mercy, whereas before he might have looked forward to reward and bliss.

The death decreed against Adam was duly dispensed to him and his progeny; and yet, though stricken, the latter had not learned to fear the Lord. They in the lapse of time forgot much of what belonged to their duty, and what remained unforgotten was left unheeded, amidst the violence and corruption which spread over the earth. And the decree went forth that the sinning race should be cut off; and the mighty flood of waters overflowed the highest mountains, and not a vestige of life was left on the earth, save those who escaped through the mercy of the Lord with the man who had been found righteous in his generations. But barely had the flood subsided, scarcely was the sign of the heavenly arch instituted as the covenant between God and all the earth, when Noah himself sinned by converting the blessing of the vine into an inebriating drink, and his son drew upon himself the parental malediction for his disrespect to his progenitor. In the succeeding generations the worship of the Creator fell speedily into disuse; for mankind wished to live free from the trammels of religion, they designed to let their own will be the rule of their actions, and they therefore refused to instruct their children in the truths which had been transmitted through Adam, Enoch, Noah, and the righteous ones of those days. No, they would not acknowledge the Lord as the sole King of all the earth; they invested with imaginary power things which are powerless; they invented beings to whom they offered adoration, only to avoid, as they vainly fancied, the responsibility they owed to the Lord of all. Anon they endeavoured to oppose themselves to the decree of their Father who had given unto them the whole earth as their dwelling; but by confounding their language, and making them speak in different dialects, He made them unintelligible to each other, and in this manner forced them to seek different homesteads on the face of the earth, and thus compelled them to endure his rule, although they had forsaken his service. But what was the state of the world in consequence of the estrangement from the true path? By degrees every species of violence and crime became every where prevailing, and men at length proceeded to worship the most loathsome reptiles and the personifications of the vices as beings deserving of adoration; and where a few were left who yet adored the true God, they had to endure the persecutions and hatred of idolaters. In those days the Lord was not acknowledged King over all the earth. He was not acknowledged the Everlasting One, and his name was not ONE among the gentiles. But it was also in those days that from the stock of a Chaldean shepherd gradually a nation grew up, to whom the Lord vouchsafed to impart a knowledge of his ways, and whom He desired to place in Him faith and hope as their King and Father, and whom He designated to be his witnesses, that He is indeed the God, and that besides Him there is no other.

The means employed to effect this object are familiar to you all. By mighty deeds and signs the Lord made his power felt in Egypt, and the people whom He had chosen followed his guidance into the trackless desert, to receive the law which He had ordained as the rule of their actions. On a former occasion your attention was drawn to the fact, that punishment had failed to awaken a sense of religion in mankind, and that a universal revelation, such as had been given in the cases of Adam and Noah, had not imbued the hearts of men with a knowledge of their duties. It is not to be said that there were no other means in the power of the Lord to establish universally a knowledge of His being and of His ordinances; but this much we may freely assert, that He adopted the best method to do this so far as our judgment reaches, by educating a whole people in the school of adversity, taking them out from bondage with a mighty hand without their own agency, and imparting to them as their possession a law founded on equal justice, and a system than which not heaven itself can be purer and truer. O, then went forward the ransomed of the Lord with childlike confidence to meet their God and King, and well did He also, at a time when they were stained with guilt, remember unto them this entireness of faith and trust; for thus says the text: "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember unto thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that is not sown. Israel is holy unto the Lord, the first fruit of his increase, all that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord." (Jer. ii. 2, 3.) But this faith lasted not for ever; soon many sinned and made themselves for worship the likeness of a grass-eating ox; and because the reign of the Lord was not universal, the Israelites also went astray after the vanities of the gentiles. Ignorance, too, of much that ought to have been universally known, followed in the train of apostacy, and after being at first an effect of irreligion, it became in its turn the parent of the forgetfulness of the Lord. But now there was a written law from which many could drink; a nation there was to whom the Word of the Lord had been given as an inheritance, and the watchword ה' אלהינו ה' אחד was too firmly established to be shaken by the most degrading apostacy and image-worship which were practised among our forefathers. And thus, though a thousand systems flourished awhile, and reigned their space on earth, they have all sunk into the black ocean of oblivion, and in their stead newer and more complicated fancies have arisen to make room for others, perhaps yet more startling, which will come after them; whilst the religion announced from Sinai is yet contained untouched, and unchanged in yonder book, which we have preserved with so much care and solicitude.

Now let us inquire, what gave the law of Moses so much greater stability than the prior revelations to the Patriarchs? Simply this, that it was based upon and connected with the history of the people who were appointed its conservators. The covenant of Abraham had been already instituted, and had descended to them with the peculiar protection of God, which had been promised them. But now the ceremonies of the new covenant bore immediately upon the things which they themselves had witnessed. The Sabbath was to remind them weekly of the great supernatural deeds which the Creator alone could have performed. The Passover was to commemorate, by the various laws incident to its celebration, the first day when the shackles were knocked off, so to say, from their swollen limbs, and when they were bid to go forth rejoicing unto freedom and truth. The Pentecost was to be kept on the day when their King lowered his majesty before their eyes on Mount Horeb, to speak unto them from amidst thunder and lightning, and the cloud of glory that enveloped the throne of his power. And lastly, the Feast of Tabernacles was established, that in all future generations the ceremonies incident thereto should recall to their memories that for many years they had travelled in the deserts of Arabia, where they did not plough the field for their support, and where they cultivated neither the vine, nor the fig-tree, nor the pomegranate, nor the olive; where they did not build houses to live in, nor cultivated the arts to supply themselves with the elegancies or even the necessaries of life. Yes, for forty years our forefathers dwelt in booths; their garments did not grow old; their shoes did not wear off from their feet; water was given them out of the flinty rock, and their daily bread was every morning, save the morning of the Sabbath, miraculously supplied to them; in short, all their wants were provided for from the immediate bounty of their God. Now these ceremonies and the recollections attendant on them were handed down from father to son, and from son to grandson; the whole life of the true Israelite was to be and was a series of reminiscences and acts of worship, all founded upon the history of his nation, and the gratitude thence resulting to their great Benefactor. And though, in many instances, much sinning was witnessed among us, the law had taken too deep root to be in danger of perishing entirely in the hearts of all Israel. No, it survived, and will survive to the end of time.

The gentiles, however, with whose history and being our religion had no connexion, could not be expected to embrace a system which was not given to them in a direct manner. They, it is true, saw the excellent effects resulting from the piety founded on the Bible; they could doubtless comprehend, with ease, the superior truthfulness of the doctrines of the Mosaic dispensation, beyond that of any other. But their knowledge of divine things was not strong enough to overcome the want of faith under which they laboured; and their inclination for unrestrained freedom was not counterbalanced by the conviction of direct accountability. So then has time passed on, and our religion is yet unacknowledged by any other people; and the law of Moses is yet the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob alone. But does it not strike you, brethren, that in all ages, and now no less than before, the proximity of the gentiles has had a pernicious effect upon the conformity to be expected from us? Have we not too readily relinquished our own blessed hopes for the vanities of those whose portion is not as our portion, and whose lot is not like our lot? Ay, truly we have a law; but where is the knowledge thereof which ought to be universal among us? where the faith which should teach us to place the favour of God above all the desires of our hearts? Alas! alas! the knowledge of divine things is not prized, we seek more the sciences and comprehension of worldly matters than to be instructed in the ways of the Lord and the duties which He has prescribed; and even if we have learned the holy Word, how anxious are we then to prove that we are free from that prejudice, as some term it, of a peculiar Jewish feeling, as though it were a disgraceful thing to esteem the religion which God gave unto the sons of Israel, and to wish to perpetuate the knowledge thereof among our descendants! Prejudice do you call this? bigotry you aver it to be? Then let us bless the time when such prejudice and such bigotry will become universal among us! But no, it is no prejudice which aims at perpetuating what God has bestowed as a special gift on Israel; it is no bigotry which endeavours to instruct the young in the ancestral institutions, and to enforce a due obedience to their behests; for they are legitimate feelings, necessarily flowing from a conviction of the truth of our professions, and have no reference whatever to the opinions of others differing from us, and have no affinity whatever with intolerance; since they do not look forward to persuade even, much less coerce any one who is not by descent a son of Abraham. But surely we ourselves ought to be ashamed of ignorance in a matter which is our very life, the cause of our existence as a separate people. Had it not been for the law, we should have been where the ancient Romans, Babylonians, Assyrians, and other nations now are, lost, blotted out, and remembered only for the evil they have done, and for the ruins which mark their existence. Do you wish such a fate for Israel? Is there one Jew, here or elsewhere, who would not shudder at the idea of the total overthrow and annihilation of his own kindred, the house of Jacob?—And how is this preservation to be effected? Solely and simply by the transmission to all our descendants of the code which established us, and by the observance of the covenant and the law which make us a separate people among the nations of the earth. We should be a light to them, but are on no account to suffer our light to be darkened by the shadow of their unbelief. If the lamp shines brightest in a dark apartment, if the miner does penetrate with its aid in the bowels of the earth: should not the true Israelite endeavour to exhibit in his knowledge and his example a model to others, that they may be struck with the conviction of God's power, and be shown that nations may with safety go in the light of the Lord which was erst kindled at the promulgation of the commandments at Horeb?—The darkness yet covers the earth, and a thick cloud the nations. Vanity after vanity has been adopted, and error has been cherished after error. One day the idolatry of a multitude of deities is abolished, only to make way for the admission of the doctrines of a prophet whom God had not sent.—Again millions subscribe their names as servants of the Lord of hosts; but in their ignorance they associate with Him a mediator between Him and his creatures, as though his hand were shortened, and He were not able to save the man He has formed and to bless the work of His hands! And shall we for things like these cease to be vigilant over ourselves? shall doctrines like these induce us no longer to seek to teach the law and to proclaim aloud without fear or reserve our hope, our confidence, our belief, our entire faith in the Lord One? Shall we be willingly ignorant or, if instructed, be wilfully untrue to our great King, forswear his service and join ourselves to the multitude, for no better reason, that we can discover, than that they are the majority, and we but few in number? And say, at what period of the world was it that the righteous were the most numerous portion of mankind? Say, how many were saved in the ark? and was not Abraham alone in his father's house when he proclaimed his faith in the Lord One? how many associates had Moses when he spoke to Pharaoh in the name of this great Being? when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how many were with Elijah when he appeared before the multitude of idolaters on Carmel? And to sum up all in a few words, at what period of the history of the world were we otherwise than a small fragment of mankind? Yet now we are to become faint-hearted, because we are not more numerous? because we are not of greater importance in the scale of society? because in the pursuit of our belief we may not be permitted to employ as many days in the acquisition of wealth as our gentile neighbours? But let us be comforted by the reflection, that no matter what our disparity in numbers, importance or worldly gains may be in comparison with others, we shall ultimately suffer no harm; if we only remain true and faithful to our Father in heaven. Let us consider how miraculously every thing has always worked for our preservation; how when the sword and pestilence slew their millions, we were comparatively exempt; how a respect for our law produces temperance and contentment, which bring in their train length of days and vigorous old age; how even in barbarous countries, where our members are denied access to high seminaries of learning, they have nevertheless the reputation for intelligence superior to their neighbours. Let us reflect on the many mercies which have sustained us in despite of ourselves, when we presumptuously went astray after the evil desires of our hearts; let us reflect on the wonderful change which has been wrought in the minds of gentiles in modern times, so that now we are regarded with more kindliness than we were before; let us consider that the same Beneficence which provided for our fathers in the desert yet watches over us, and works all these deeds in our behalf: and surely we shall not find cause for murmuring at the fact that the law of Moses is yet imposed on us as our lot, and that we are called upon to make it appear lovely to our children, and to glorify by its observance the name of the Lord One before the eyes of the families of the earth.

In this manner I meant to exhibit that, though we stand alone, we would be acting suicidally, were we to relax in our duty. But another consideration yet remains, and this is, that, as we accepted the law because its principles were interwoven with our history and being, so there will come a time when the same will be the case with the gentiles. Remember that the law was not intrusted to us for our own gratification merely, but chiefly that through us the kingdom of God might be established on earth. When this establishment of universal truth will take place, is not for us to solve; the fact is sure of fulfilment; the time only is concealed from us. But, till this time comes, we are bound by the terms of our covenant with God to keep alive the fire of religion upon the altar of the world.—No matter who thou art, humble son of Jacob! thou art a priest in the sanctuary, and it is thy province to purify thyself for the service by knowledge and faith, to nourish the holy flame which is to illumine in God's own time the ends of the earth. Nor must thou be weary with watching! But every day do thou raise thy eyes and heart to thy great Father, and entreat Him that He would give thee light to see and strength to endure; that thou mayest stand undismayed in the assault of passions which would counsel thee to stray aside from thy path, and to walk away upon the roads of sin, the end of which is darkness and death.—And indeed how would it be with us, were we to become unfaithful to our trust, on the day of the great redemption, when all nations are to rejoice in the great glory then to be revealed to all eyes? what shame, what contrition would be ours, were we no longer recognizable as a separate people adhering with unshaken faith to the God of Abraham! But it cannot come to this! We may be inclined to swerve, many may actually sink into the embrace of their seducers, and leave the fold of the Lord; but many more will, with all this, remain to rally round the sacred emblem of the law; and when the standard is raised on the mountains, when nations will flock to the son of David to be taught of the ways of the Lord, the children of Jacob will be there to receive joyfully among them the sons of the stranger, who will no longer be eager for their destruction, but emulous like themselves to become children of salvation under the law, which is quickening unto life, both by its letter and its spirit. And when this has taken place, the Lord will institute to the gentiles one of our festivals, the Feast of which we are now celebrating the conclusion, on which they are annually to assemble through their deputies to worship before the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem. And why this feast? Because the Passover and the Pentecost were properly days of liberation of Israel from physical and moral bondage; but the Tabernacles, as was said already, is a commemoration of divine goodness and protection; it is the emblem of the superintending watchfulness of the all-seeing Eye who leaves not a bird to fall to the ground before its time, and who regards alike the lowly and the great. When now the nations are brought to a knowledge that their thoughts were vain, and their deities powerless to save: they will become, so to say, more immediately children of Providence, and subjects of the King of kings, and servants of the Lord of lords; they will no longer be a stumbling-block by their ignorance and example to the people of Israel; but they will, like these, acknowledge as God the Everlasting One alone, and thus He will be the King of all the earth, acknowledged the sole God, and emphatically be called ONE, since besides Him and with Him no being will receive the adoration of any son of man. And to commemorate this great event the festival of providential care will be a season of universal rejoicing, and from all the earth will come ambassadors to the residence of their King, to bow down and to worship at the house where He will let his glory visibly dwell among mankind. And this state of universal knowledge will be a state of universal righteousness, and no one who is unwilling to acknowledge his subjection to the majesty of Heaven will be left to encumber the earth with his presence.

But says the doubter, "Will indeed all this come to pass?" Yes, it will! all the accounts of past ages teach us that every thing is perishable, and has perished or will perish, save the word of God alone. This alone has survived all the shocks of time; and often as it was neglected, much as it has been obscured by the acts and words of men, it has ever risen up again with renewed and increased vigour. And therefore have in all ages the altars of heathenism stooped and tumbled down before the power of this Word; and the errors too of the new systems, which have engrafted upon its holy foundation the ideas of a mediator and similar theories, will surely vanish when the warfare against truth will have ended. Already now the mighty fabrics are shaken! the thousand-columned temples tremble! the teachers of error are at war with each other! one binds, the other loosens! pillar after pillar crumbles to the dust! and in vain do the mighty take counsel against the Lord and his anointed. But proceed in your unholy work, your working is in vain! He that sits enthroned in heaven smiles at your endeavours, and the words of faith which our babes are taught to lisp, and which ring in the ear of our dying sires, "The Lord is One," will hurl you from power and level to the ground the mighty fabrics on which you have been toiling for ages. Yes, "the Lord is One! his name is one" will yet be the faith of all the world, and then will be indeed a day of glory, and a day of rejoicing to all the faithful, to the servants that remained true and unshaken, who taught unflinchingly the truth they had themselves received, and who persevered in the service of the Lord whilst but few so worshipped. But they too will rejoice who are glowing with a new zeal in the work of regeneration, who come from all parts of the world, (which now has been rendered easily possible by the recent improvements in the arts applied to travelling,) to worship annually the Lord at Jerusalem his holy city, on this festival of Tabernacles; and thus men from all nations and from all climes, the fair European and the sooty Ethiop; the men from the icy pole and they from the burning equator, all, all will exclaim, with one heart and one voice, in speech again understood by all alike and in a dialect no longer diverse and not comprehended by every son of Adam: The Lord is King over all the earth! no one is to share his glory; there is no saviour besides Him our Saviour; He is One and One be his name, praised and glorified for evermore! Amen.

Our Father and King! cast out for our iniquities we are scattered among the gentiles, and our sanctuary is desolate, our altars are destroyed, and no priest is there to make atonement for our sins. But in our captivity we have been taught to feel more strongly our dependence upon thy bounty and mercy! O have mercy then upon the remnant that has escaped, and be Thou our priest by accepting in favour the words of our lips, and let the meditations of our hearts be acceptable as incense before Thee. Shed also thy grace upon our spirit, and enlighten us in the knowledge of our duties, so that we may subdue our hearts to thy service; and spread the pavilion of thy peace over us, that we may unitedly press forward to be emulous in thy service. Bless our endeavours which are made to render thy law more known and loved, and remove from among us the stumbling blocks of unbelief, ignorance and causeless contention and hatred. So that we may live securely, sheltered by thy blessing and invigorated by thy love, amid the nations, till the day when Thou wilt show us again wonders as at the time we went forth from Egypt. May this be thy will. Amen!

Tishry 21st. } 5602.
October 6th. }

DISCOURSE VI.

DIVINE JUSTICE.

O Lord our God! how exalted is thy goodness, how fearful is thy power! Thou speakest, and we are called into being, and thy right hand and thy support shield us as we gradually advance into life. And when we stand before Thee in all the strength of manhood, in the vaunted light of human intellect, it is at last thy light and thy wisdom which fill our soul with knowledge and imbue our spirit with understanding. And when in thy unerring judgment our end has come, when it seems to Thee best that our allotted task be ended: is it not then thy power which sets a limit to our being? O truly we know that we are thine, the work of thy hands; thine to dispose of us as seems best to Thee, with no one to gainsay thy will, saying, "What doest Thou?" O cause us then to feel our nothingness, fill us with the full appreciation of our dependent state, in order that we may learn to subdue our hearts to thy worship, and to subject to thy will all our desires and our otherwise unholy wishes; so that we may be able to submit cheerfully to whatever Thou decreest over us, and to say even when those dear to us are all removed, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken; blessed be the name of the Lord." Amen!

Brethren!

We often hear persons boast of their religious observance, of their religious hopes and comfortable experience of an inward holiness; whereas there are others who ridicule all such sentiments and actions founded upon them, and speak and live as though there were nothing deserving of more consideration than the mode of life, which they would fain make us believe to be the legitimate result of human reasoning. The pride of spiritual elevation of the first class, and the vaunting indifference of the other are equally apparent; and if the first is at times odious through its often misplaced zeal and stoical indifference, the latter becomes disgusting through its disregard of the spiritual light, which the Creator bestows on men through the variety of incidents and changes which constitutes human life. When therefore a man is absorbed in the idea of his own excellence, be this the result of an overweening sense of righteousness and religious confidence, or produced by a disregard of the duty which he owes to his Maker: he is equally void, although in different degrees, of that religious humility and singleness of faith which are held up to our imitation by the great luminaries of our race, such as Abraham and Moses. But the number of outwardly strict zealots, whose religion consists in externals more than in a deep-seated knowledge of their sinful nature, is not so great as of the class of the unbelievers in a direct responsibility to God for all their doings; or, in other words, there are more who do not feel religion both outwardly and inwardly, than those who are mere formalists; and, consequently, we are very apt to be oftener shocked by non-conformity, than by the heedless, persecuting zeal of men who lack spirituality in their religion.

It is not, however, our purpose to-day to contrast the evils which spring from the absence of religion on the one side, and its misapplication on the other; but we will merely endeavour to show the applicability of a proper sense of our relation to God to the endurance of whatever may be dispensed to us; and to exhibit the dangers which must arise, if our mind is not betimes subjected to a proper training and a correct conception of things, which it behooves us to weigh well in every stage of our existence. Let us reflect. We are the creatures of an all-wise Providence. What is Providence? It is that quality or attribute of the Deity which surveys, superintends, and provides for all the occurrences of life. Can this attribute be exercised by inadvertence? without due care and reflection? Assuredly not; or else we must impute to the Lord the imperfections of finite nature, since the absence of care and thought is the cause of error in man as often at least as want of knowledge.

To impute want of knowledge to God would at once strike any reflecting mind as inconsistent with his purity; and for the same reason the absence of care must be equally so. Now, if God knows every thing, —we know He does and must,—it follows from our definition, that He cannot avoid, from the immensity of his knowledge and power, which extend and are applicable to the minutest thing, no less than to the greatest, directing his view and his superintendence to every portion of what He has created, that is, to every thing which enjoys an existence. In such a superintendence there can occur no mistake in any event within the ken of the supervising Power: or, in other words, no event can take place in all the range of existence which has not received the sanction of Providence, which is the power exercising this superintending care. I do not mean to assert that this limits our liberty of choice; for the agents endowed with intellect, such as man is, have received a freedom to do as they please without control, so far as actual force is concerned; that is to say, there is no compulsion exercised to make them act counter to their will and inclination. In addition to, and in consequence of, this freedom of choice, there is *responsibility*, by which I mean, that each and all are responsible for any act they do from a free choice, where no insurmountable force is laid upon their freedom of selecting. In so far only, then, the Providence which guards us is *not* accountable for every occurrence, and in so far are we not at liberty to say, that *every* event in which man as a free agent is the actor is of an unmixed good character and tendency, since herein *man* and not Providence is responsible. It is not, however, for us to determine precisely how the omniscience of God is compatible with an unlimited freedom of action: enough for our purpose that this is the doctrine of Scripture; and with this we must rest satisfied as believers in the justice and truth of the Most High. All that was meant to be exhibited in this connexion is to assert, as a legitimate deduction from scriptural authority, that all the occurrences of life emanating immediately from a Source independent of direct human agency are in their nature an unmixed benefit to the world at large, and within the scope of a just administration of the world by its Divine Author. Let us examine this by the standard we have laid down. The Creator must be beneficent, or else He would not of a free choice have given life to so many beings, and filled the world with so many means of affording enjoyment to every living creature; as says David (Ps. cxlv. 15, 16), "The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season; Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." He cannot be capricious, irritable, and changing in his affections; for wherever we turn our view, if we inquire into events of a bygone age or of our own times, we shall discover that an unceasing chain of acts of kindness is visible in every department of nature; and that where a destruction is presented at a first glance, it is but a step to a renewed existence in another and perhaps a more beautiful and permanent shape and form; in fact, that which in our haste we term destruction, annihilation, or loss, is not so in reality. Now, if this can be proved to be true, it follows as a necessary consequence, that every act of Providence is of an unmixed good character. But what can be said of pain? of sorrow? of sickness? of death? are they not evils? They certainly are so, to speak the language of man; but it does not follow that they are not requisites in the economy of a beneficent Providence. It is only necessary that we come to approach the investigation, whenever any such evil is presented in our own instance or that of those dear to us, with minds properly imbued with knowledge and confiding trust, and the consideration that, however we may look upon ourselves and our own immediate friends as of vast importance to ourselves, we and they are at last nothing more than a small integral portion of the entire immensity which forms, in its various ramifications and almost endless variety, the system of nature which our and its God has created in wisdom and mercy.

Says David (Ps. cxlv. 9): "The Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works;" and the longer we investigate, the more readily will we yield assent to the truth of this assertion. We must not forget that our God is eternal, everlastingly the same, of unending power. If then to-day we are suffering from any thing we call evil, that does not prove that to-morrow there may not be a sudden and blissful change in our circumstances. At the beginning of night there may be weeping, and sobs, and sorrow, and the rising sun may scatter joy, and gladsome smiles, and renewed hope. Ay, the sun of our earthly life may set, as men speak, for ever; but may, does it not shine more lucent, more unclouded in a renewed state of existence? Are we cut off utterly, because our earthly life is ended? Reflect, brethren, that admitting you do not understand this, I would ask you to explain to me what is life as we find it before us? Look upon the butterfly which flits along on gay painted pinions: has it not life? Upon the nightingale whose melody, though himself unseen, ravishes your delighted ear: has he not life? Upon the fleet horse as he dashes along in his heedless career obeying the will of his rider? Upon the vast and huge elephant, who stands in his towering strength amidst the din of battle and the rush of contending hosts: has he not life? And then turn upon the many races of man, each distinguished by some peculiar characteristic, by some marked difference of feature: and tell me, have they not life? And then inform me, if you can, what paints the butterfly's wings? what gives sweetness to the nightingale's song? what fleetness to the horse? what strength, and sagacity, and courage to the elephant? what speech, variety of dialect, diversity of colour and temperament, to the different races of our own species? Perhaps to explain this mystery, you will resort to the assertion that it is the result of organization, coupled with vitality. But by saying this you only use synonymous terms with the word life, and you have not advanced a single step in your attempted explanation. And no matter how learned you are, all you can do is to assert it is so; and if you are really wise, you will at once confess your ignorance of God's ultimate purpose, and your inability to penetrate farther than the mere surface into a proper understanding of his creation. We assume, therefore, as proved, that life itself is a mystery, that the intellect which distinguishes man above the brute is too subtle a substance (if substance it may properly be called which can not be subject to the admeasurement capable to be performed by our bodily senses) to be correctly comprehended by any means in our power. We will proceed a step farther, and assert that there is an essential difference between animal and human life; for, despite of the great sagacity which some dumb creatures, such as the horse, dog, camel, and elephant display; despite of the forethought exhibited by others, for instance, the beaver and the busy little bee; despite of the extreme swiftness possessed by some, as the chamois and the deer, and their instinct to seek the inaccessible heights to which they resort; despite of the ferocity exhibited by many others, such as you see in the untamed lion, the voracious tiger, and the spotted leopard, they are all subject to the power and control of man, who is generally their inferior in some physical capacity; and nearly all, if not all, can be tamed to his use, and be even domesticated and live in companionship, though in servitude, with him. Does not this prove the truth of the Scripture which, in the history of creation, asserts that man was created to be the lord of all subordinate nature, from the insect that dances in the sunbeam, to the mighty whale that lashes into foam the waters of the vasty deep? Another thing, however, it proves likewise, that the spirit of man is essentially different from the vitality which is inherent to animals; and that though man, considered as an animal, which he undeniably is, has propensities and wants which ally him to his subordinates, there is something, whatever that something may be, which places him in a state of exaltation far, far above the greatest and wisest of them all. This something, by way of distinction, we call in Hebrew נפש or רוח, soul or spirit in English. It is not so much the words we use as the idea we convey, which is of any importance in our inquiry. We say, therefore, that deny as you please the independent existence of spirit, you must admit that there is a something which elevates man above the beast, properly so called, and whether you call it spirit or not, soul or something else, it matters not; and the existence of this ethereal, invisible fluid (again to use a phrase often employed, though it does not correspond altogether with the idea, so poor is language that very often we feel more than we can express) is proved by the very means which you employ to deny its existence; for it is felt, its activity is experienced, whether you put man as a rider on the back of the horse, whether you exhibit him as leading the bear along obedient to his every nod, or whether you place him before others of his species expressing by articulate and defined sounds the emotions which are agitating, or the fears which trouble him. Is there not enough of evidence in all these and a thousand other things, to prove beyond doubt, that, as we read in Job xxxii. 8: "But there is spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding?" And if you say, it is too wonderful for belief, then again we will recur to the question which we already propounded relative to the organization of animal life; and till this be clearly and incontestably elucidated, we will rest for security upon the authority of Scripture, which is, as we have proved, borne out by our own experience, that there is a SPIRIT distinct from matter. If now such an existence is possible, what hinders the Almighty to let it continue in existence after the body shall have taken the usual course of organized life, that is, ceased to exist in the shape it was wont to bear? or to express ourselves in terms more familiarly used, what prevents God to grant us a heavenly life, after our earthly career is ended? But again you say, that you do not understand it: let us, therefore, resort to some more minute elucidation. What is death? The cessation of animate existence, or decay, rottenness, corruption, whether applied to animal or vegetable life. Is it any thing else? surely not. You will perhaps say it is annihilation, a destruction, total and final. But is this borne out by our every-day experience? Behold the voracious silkworm, or the destructive caterpillar. It crawls as it were into life, a minute, unsightly, shapeless thing. Watch it,—it seizes upon the green herbage which nature so bountifully provides; it grows rapidly, amazingly, to the full size which it is capable of attaining; behold, its work is done; it eats no more; it only seeks for repose to weave its own winding-sheet. Approach it again, it lies motionless, buried, dead in its silvery sepulchre: and is its existence ended? You err; a new life soon is active in the tiny charnel-house, and from the wonderful cerement springs forth a new insect, and speeds along in a new existence, and with wondrously spangled wings, basking in the bright sunlight of summer, alighting upon the open cups of flowers less glowing and beautiful in gaudy array than the erst despised and crawling worm!—Or follow the ploughman as he draws the lengthening furrows over the yielding soil; behind him steps lightly the seedman and drops into the open bosom of the earth the seed, which is to yield him a rich return. The harrow passes again over the furrow, and from the human sight the rich treasure is hid, and is surrendered confidingly into the hands of the Giver of life. And soon the seed dies, rots, decays, is no longer fit for human food, and its bright colouring is changed to a dull, colourless mass. But is the death final? has existence terminated with decay? Again come hither, and look: as far as your eye reaches, a covering of the richest green o'erspreads the field; for the decaying seed has become instinct with new life, and a beneficent Providence elicits the germ from a putrescent source. Anon the wintry snows bury up the tender shoots, and again the field is hid from view for days and weeks by the gentle downy cover which drops from the cloud-clad sky; but still the seeds die not—they yet survive this change even. And when the vernal sun bursts forth to gladden anew the frozen earth, he speedily strips the landscape of its uniform deadness and dreary aspect; and as he mounts higher in his course, so too the young and tender shoots acquire strength and fulness, and ere the summer has sped away, a blissful harvest overjoys the husbandman, who reaps the fruit of his labour from amidst corruption and decay.

Is this not so? is not every growth and increase preceded by corresponding changes of form? What, then, is death, even as we find it, but a transmutation from one state to another? And who says, then, that death is final when applied to man? True, we too open the earth, and each and all of us deposit in the opened grave a seed more valued, than that which readily drops from the hands of the husbandman; with tearful eyes we stand by as more and more the beloved is hidden from view; but do we not, even as does the husbandman, intrust what we place in the earth into the hands of the Lord of life? and may we not then expect to see arising from the grave bedewed with *our* tears, and warmed ere long by the sun of Heaven, a new life, a new and holier existence? It is wonderful thus to believe; but are the physical changes which we have described less wonderful, though they admit not of doubt or cavil? And shall a mere speechless insect rise into a newer and more beautiful life? shall the inanimate seed ripen into a new existence, multiplied and varied a thousand fold? and yet shall it be unreasonable to believe that the crown of God's creation may not be likewise restored, nay in the very flesh, arising again from the corruption into which his body has been thrown? Yes, we are doubters; we fancy that our cause is not correctly judged by our everlasting Judge; nevertheless, his word is full of promise, full of the assurance of better things; and thus speaks the prophet (Isaiah xxvi. 19, 20): "They shall live, thy dead; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." We could cite many more passages from the blessed volume to prove, that it affirms in language not to be misunderstood, that death is but a phase in our existence, a connexion between life and eternity; and if a mystery, it is certainly no greater mystery than life itself, as was endeavoured to be shown.

All this proves, incontestably, that the so-called evil is a part of providential rule, and one of the changes which we must undergo in order to be able to assume that station or that state of existence for which we were created. Some of you may perhaps ask: "Why are we not at once placed into the highest state of perfection, without our passing first through so many trials to reach it?" But reflect that, to dive in this manner into the counsel of God, would be in effect arrogating to ourselves wisdom of an equal degree as is possessed by Him; as well might the infant ask, why he is not born at once a man in stature and intellect. Every thing on earth is progressive, every thing is capable of improvement by education and training; and why may we not assume that our earthly existence is also a state of progressive improvement, no less than of probation? The Lord gave us for this reason a law of truth, which, being the emanation of his own will and wisdom, must, if obeyed, guide us aright on the path which leads to happiness. And in this spirit we read (Isaiah xlii. 21): "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; He magnifieth the law, and maketh it honourable." Yes, brethren, without diving daringly into the secret will of our Maker, we may assert that angelic perfection is no test of merit, inasmuch as perfection attained as the gift of the Creator, without the previous labour of the creature, is not deserving of reward, seeing that it was impossible to reject the least part of the blissful attainment. Whereas the presence of temptation, the existence of attainable evil, render the avoidance of the last and the disregard of the former a matter of praiseworthy and meritorious activity. If man were immortal, then must he have been made sinless and passionless; for only in such a state would it comport with wisdom to leave him on earth; since, as it now is, the only relief mankind has, under Providence, of the injuries inflicted by the wicked is their removal by death, or incapacity by diseases, mental or bodily. Ask we then, "Why does evil exist? why do we meet with sorrow, with pain, with suffering, with death?" we shall be answered, these are the agents of the Deity to restrain the effects of sin upon mankind at large. "Why do the righteous die? and suffer?" Because no man is free from sin, and because man in a mixed state of good and evil is not destined to remain here for ever; and since the spirit cannot be purified whilst it is in connexion with the body, it follows as a necessary consequence that a severance must take place whenever the Lord deems it best. "Do not many pious people die young and in the midst of usefulness?" Assuredly; but again, are we the judges of our Maker, to prescribe Him rules for action? Our wise men have left us a beautiful apologue on this subject, which permit me to relate to you in this place: A wise king upon a time hired a number of labourers to work in a beautiful garden near his palace, and about midday he came himself to superintend and to look at his servants. All were at work, but he singled out one who appeared most industrious and intent on his labour. The king seeing this called him to himself, and suffered him not to return to his work for the remainder of the day. At nightfall all the labourers called for their wages, and those who had worked the whole day, were surprised when the king ordered the full amount to be paid out to him who had been at work but half the time. As natural, the others murmured at what they conceived an injustice to them: "Have we not laboured the whole day? and are we to be paid no more than one who has not earned more than half that we did?" "Silence," commanded the king; "it was my fault that he did not work as long as you did, and it was my knowledge of his superior excellence that I took him early from his task to converse with me." You, of course, understand the application. The king is the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be his name; the garden is our earthly existence; the palace the state of felicity in the presence of our Lord; the labourers all mankind; the day of labour the life of man; the labourer called by the king from his work the righteous who diligently strives to fulfil all the duties accessible to him; nightfall is the close of life, when all mankind come before the divine tribunal to receive the reward of their labour. And when now it pleases the Lord to remove a faithful servant betimes from the field of his usefulness, what needs he complain? will not his reward be as ample as though all his good intentions had been accomplished? and what right have the aged labourers to complain? was it not the Lord of the beautiful garden, the Master of them all, who called to himself thus early the one who had been appointed to work with them for a time?

In this light must we view the loss of the righteous; God deemed it best to end their task; they had found grace in his sight, and their reward, therefore, must be sure, though others have done more and laboured longer.—"Why are diseases sent?" If life were to pass away without any pain to endure, how bitter would be the parting; we could not think of quitting an existence so constantly blessed with sweets and joys. But in mercy to corruptible nature, the seeds of decay shoot up into sight before the harvest is ready for the sickle; and when the body is racked with pain, when the intellect becomes clouded: man himself looks forward to a cessation of life by the mild hand of death; mild, I say, because it closes upon him a scene of anguish, insupportable for his feeble strength.—"And why do we often suffer from penury? from obloquy? from unmerited censure?" All these are trials by which our constancy is proved, by which we ourselves can judge of ourselves, whether or not we love the Lord with all our heart, all our soul, and all our might.—Again, we have often sinned, and all such sufferings are then sent upon us in mercy, to awaken our attention, and to admonish us, that we have subjected ourselves to wrath, and that we ought speedily to return and seek a renewal of divine favour.

Who then will complain of the injustice of God? seeing that we are his in every sense of the word, finite while He is unending? mortal while He is of everlasting life? Yes, why should we doubt of his mercy when we suffer, seeing that it is in his power to save and to bless, yea, to save and to bless though our life is ended? And so we are taught by our pious teachers (Berachoth, ix. 5): "A man is bound to bless God for the evil, as well as he blesses Him for the good; for it is written, And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might; with all thy heart,—subject to Him thy bad no less than thy good propensity; with all thy soul,—even if He take thy soul; and with all thy might,—with whatever thou possessest of worldly things; so also art thou bound to be extremely thankful to Him for every measure He may mete out to thee." Yes, this should be our study from our earliest youth, to consider every act of the Lord as intended for our individual and social improvement, as sent in mercy to bind the creature closer and closer to his Maker.

Having premised this much, let us turn our attention to the second point of our subject, namely, the dangers arising from an improper training, which we stated to be an over-confidence in our righteousness, and disregard of spiritual light. The person who looks upon himself as better than his neighbours because of his piety, is not likely to go through life in humility and devotion. He looks upon God as his debtor, who ought to pay him liberally for the many good deeds he daily executes. If, then, any evil occurs to him, he feels himself wronged by his great Judge, he imagines, perhaps, that his case has not been properly noticed before the august tribunal. Again, he beholds those who are wicked prosperous and joyful; and straightway he asks, "What use is my piety? the wicked flourish as well as myself,—nay, they are richer, happier, more renowned than I am; there is no use, so far as I am concerned, in my being righteous." Many feel so, though but few may give vent to their complaints in words; many thus arraign the justice and mercy of Him before whom there is no perversion nor deceit. And see you not, that the next step to such complaining may be an apostacy to the way of the sinner? may not boastful, self-sufficient piety, degenerate into open rebellion? And has not this, alas! been the case with many an Israelite, who, seeing the nations prosperous and at peace, whilst his own brothers are wanderers and oppressed, burst the chains which bound him to the yoke of the Lord, because he felt not the full force of the cause of tribulation, of the purifying effects of sorrow and humbleness upon the rightly thinking mind? And suppose even that the piety of the complaining should be too deeply seated to be moved by his envy and discontent: still he will not be equal to the task of bearing becomingly the lot which the highest of all wisdom and justice may assign him; life will be rendered miserable, and his end, notwithstanding his good deeds, will not be the death of the righteous who have learned betimes, and practised what they have learned, to regard God not alone as merciful and great, but as just and impartial in all He dispenseth.

Now turn we to the scornful unbeliever, who esteems his own will and wisdom as paramount to all, who looks not to the word of God for his guide through life. How does he regard the workings of Providence? He sees in them nothing to admire, nothing to dread. He knows, at least he cannot help knowing, that he is mortal and corruptible,—the child of disease, of sorrow. But what is that to him? To use a phrase familiar to such spirits, he says, "Whilst we live, let us live;" and he accordingly plunges to satiety into the pleasures and follies of life, as though by such means he could ward off the annihilation which he professes to expect, which he nevertheless dreads. His spirit, his soul, the better part of himself, is in the meanwhile in total darkness: he will not listen, he will not know. He is irresponsible, so he fancies; and if the thought of a Deity presents itself, he denies his providence, alleging that One so exalted will not regard the deeds of one so humble as himself. But is this idea the offspring of humility or of pride? Evidently of the latter; for if he were humble, and not elated at the consciousness of his dignity, wisdom, and importance, he would forego the inspiration of his own wild notions of things, and submit to be taught by the recorded will of his God. Yet speak to him of an Avenger of the covenant, and he will ridicule the weakness which would ascribe to the purest Spirit the malignity of human passion, forgetting, all the while, that it is not so much our gracious Father who punishes, as the justice which pervades every thing that demands retribution, for light given and for grace wilfully rejected. He therefore lives as though there were no eternity; he fancies there is nothing beyond material life, and nothing more to be prized than the enjoyment of material things whilst this life endures. Thus his days pass away in idle pursuits, in vanities which leave no fruit behind. And when evil befalls him, he curses the fate which he believes unavoidable, and thinks not of prayer, of grace, and divine aid. And when the sands of life run low, he glories, perhaps, in having so long braved the anger of the Most High with impunity, and that despite of his blasphemy he has lived to a high old age, in the enjoyment of many gifts and blessings, with no thunderbolt of Heaven to cut him down in his daring wickedness. He sinks into death, still denying his accountability, and now he believes that annihilation will close on the scene for ever. —But there will be an awakening, an awakening of horror and anguish: the sinner has indeed passed away, but the Avenger, the Judge is ready to mete out retribution! O now it is too late! the agonized soul shrinks abashed, overwhelmed before the Almighty's awful throne, her sins unconfessed, her transgressions unatoned! And gladly would she now return to life to obey the precepts which were once contemned, to seek the light which was formerly shunned, to accept the grace which was but lately rejected. No lying evasions will now avail, and the hiding of the light, perhaps for ever, the denial of grace for enduring years, the rejection from favour till all the sins are expiated, will be the doom. Still even then in mercy will existence be vouchsafed, for even to the wicked their death will not be final; and though "their worm will not die, nor their fire be quenched," they will yet have the grace given them to endure the punishment to which they are condemned, and be a memorial of the difference between those who served the Lord and those who sought not his worship.

No, brethren, neither the overweening pride of religious hope, nor its opposite, religious forgetfulness, can tranquillize the spirit; nor can that stoical indifference be approved of, which can look unmoved upon suffering, with feelings so blunted that all the shafts of God fall harmless at the sufferer's feet. Sufferings are sent to be felt, trials are dispensed that they might improve us; we may weep, and mourn;

but we are only not permitted to murmur; and he who smiles when a friend is carried to the grave, who drops not a tear as the remains of the precious dead are laid low in their narrow dwelling, is equally far from the true point of religious resignation, as he who murmurs and complains, as though a wrong had been done to his person and the merits he has claims for upon Providence. True religion is meek and hopeful; it feels the chastisement of the Lord, yet bows with resignation; it endeavours to learn lessons of humility, and strives to profit by the warning which is discoverable in the visitation, whilst deeply in the bosom rankles the arrow which has been sent to wound, only to be a call to amendment, and a summons to return from the path of error which prosperity and peace may, peradventure, have opened to us. And thus says the wisest of men (Prov. iii. 11, 12):

מוסר ה' בני אל תמאס ואל תקץ בתוכחתו : כי את
אשר יאהב ה' יוכיח וכאב את בן ירצה : משלי ג' יא' יב':

"My son! despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

Indeed the Providence, whom we adore, watches over us with paternal solicitude, and not the slightest occurrence reaches us, be it good or evil, but has been dispensed from Him. We are his children, He our Father; not in anger but in love are his visitations; and even as our Father is everlasting, so is his mercy; and thus are his children always under his care, be they here in this mutable life, or in yonder existence where there is no change nor sorrow.

Considerations like these should ever be before our eyes, whenever the current of life does not run along in one undisturbed calm surface. And how seldom is this! every day almost brings with it some care, some grief to remind us of our mortality, to convince us that we are but a shadow that passeth away. Nations and communities, no less than individuals, are liable to these warnings; for death is constantly busy to snatch away those prominent for virtue and usefulness, after their task is done, and to bear them off to the silent tomb. Is it, then, proper, that such an event should occur without our attention being arrested? without the chastisement being felt? No, this were not wise; this would not be the part of children of grace, as are the people Israel, who have so long been taught to know that their Redeemer indeed liveth, and that they are his creatures, and to Him accountable. Let us, then, pause awhile on the bereavement which this congregation so lately experienced in the death of its president.* It is not my purpose now to pass a splendid eulogium upon the departed; for it becomes not a mortal when he acknowledges his nothingness, to glorify another mortal. But this much we may be permitted to say, that our late president was a sincere believer in the tenets of our faith, and devotedly attached to its principles. Of late years, especially, he had given proof that he felt the solemn obligation of surrendering his interests to the calls of his religion; and every measure proposed, which promised to promote piety, met with his hearty approval and co-operation. We will not advert to his private relation in the bosom of his family circle: enough that he was there beloved, and respected abroad. When he erred, we may freely assert, that it was never from bad intentions, such was the kindliness of disposition which he evinced on all occasions. —Only lately he was active among the living, anticipating a happy succession of years. Yet this anticipation, as if in mockery of human calculation, was sadly frustrated; and after a few brief days of illness he sunk calmly, imperceptibly almost, into the embrace of his Maker, surrounded in his last moments by many friends and dear relatives, who all felt that a valuable man had been taken away from among us. You were witnesses how numbers flocked together to pay the last honours to his memory, and how universal a burst of sympathy was expressed for those whom he left to mourn over their bereavement. Does it need any farther proof to attest his worth?—Only one thing remains now for me to do: it is to admonish you all not to neglect the correction which you have all received in this sad admonition. Are your lives secure against the approach of death? are you prepared to meet the change that is impending? Prepare yourselves, then, betimes, whilst yet the sun is high above the horizon, for know that his setting is fast approaching. O! vow it here, here in the house of our God, to be true and faithful, faithful to the end, that you may be accepted when your spirit is required back, let the summons come when it may. Tarry not, delay not, O men of Israel! but resolve at once to show your regard for the deceased, whom you wish to honour, and your love for God's word, which you should obey, that you feel the warning that has been addressed you in its full force. Believe me, there is sin among us,—let us not deceive ourselves in regard to our righteousness; and let the evil be removed, whilst the grace is yet given us to amend. By this means we shall indeed be chastened and made better; more peace and more light will dwell among us; and when in after years we call to mind the memory of the departed, let us hope that we may be able to say, that many who before were indifferent, have through his decease been awakened to reflection, and been thus made children of salvation through obedience to the law. Then, indeed, will his spirit rejoice over the good which has been wrought, and he will rest in peace, whilst we all shall be participants of the blessings which are destined for the righteous.

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* The late Lewis Allen. The above sermon was preached by request at the conclusion of the first month after Mr. A.'s decease.

O Thou, our Father and God! how great and wonderful art Thou. Low before Thee every creature bends; powerless and weak are the mightiest men.—Do Thou, O Lord! send the spirit of thy consolation unto those who mourn, and cause them to understand that it is Thou who afflictest them in mercy. Make even for us the path of life, and when our end has come, O, then, render for us easy the pangs of death, that we may yield our spirit into thy hand, resigned to, and conscious of, thy universal rule in all the world, feeling that indeed Thou art One, the sole God, whom our forefathers, thy servants, adored.—Upon the widow, orphans, and relatives of the deceased, we beseech Thee to shed thy grace, and make them strong in hope, teach them to lean upon Thee in truth, and to acknowledge the justice and mercy of thy decree; and cause thy light to be with them in their pilgrimage, that they may devote their heart and soul to Thee, their God and King.—And upon this congregation look down with mercy and forgiveness; and if Thou comest to purify, then let thy mercy prevail, and diminish us not in thy wrath which we have merited by our many transgressions. And O fill the minds of the rulers of this synagogue with knowledge and the spirit of truth, that they may lead the flock intrusted to their care aright, so that many blessed fruits of piety may spring up under their guidance. But not for our own righteousness, but for the sake of thy Holy Name do Thou this, for we know that we have sinned; yet it is thy wont to forgive and to pardon. Do therefore now as Thou hast ever done, and bless thy people Israel with much might and peace; so that we of this city, and wherever we are scattered, may all live to glorify Thee and to hallow thy name in this life, and be witnesses of thy glory at the time of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Amen!

Kislev 27th. } 5602.
Decbr. 10th. }

DISCOURSE VII.

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL.*

O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers! how glorious is thy name in all the earth. From generation to generation Thou art God, and beside Thee there is no saviour and redeemer. How blessed are they therefore who trust in Thee! how happy those to whom Thou art God! And ever thus were blessed the children thy heritage, the sons of Jacob thy servant, whom Thou didst choose to be unto Thee a people and a peculiar treasure. From bondage, from galling slavery, Thou didst ransom their bodies by a mighty deliverance and unthought of wonders; and at a time when thy service was unknown to nearly the whole race of man, Thou didst proclaim unto them thy law, and make them feel that in Thee, the all-wise, the all-powerful, omnipresent, omniscient One, they should acknowledge their divine Ruler and King! Are we then not blessed? is not our lot cast in delightful parts? Yet have we often murmured, felt as though thy yoke were too heavy a burden for our obdurate necks to bear! We went after strange gods, and sought the sinful pleasures which thy laws prohibit. And therefore came upon us the many evils which we endure this day, therefore lies now heavy upon us the burden of our sins. But Thou, O Lord! art mighty to save and ready to forgive, and even according to thy unending mercies do Thou deal with us; and if we have sinned greatly, let thy abundant kindness throw the veil of oblivion over our transgression; and when Thou purifiest us in thy judgment, which is ever holy, ever merciful, ever sparing of the repentant, then guard us by thy might, that we be not cut off utterly; so that we may ever remain on earth, to make known in all future generations thy power, thy glory, thy truth, thy unity unto all those who know Thee not, who worship Thee not alone and in truth as do thy children Israel, whom Thou didst release from Pharaoh's bondage. Amen.

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* Delivered at the Synagogue Mikve Israel on the seventeenth anniversary of the dedication of the same.

BRETHREN!

In our intercourse with the gentiles around us, it is of frequent occurrence that we hear them speak after this manner: "We believe that once you were the chosen people of God, and that through you and the prophets who arose from among you, there came salvation to mankind; but this state of blessedness is now no longer yours; you have been rejected for your rebellion, and your long captivity proves that you are no longer the chosen people; you are therefore in darkness in your perseverance to abide by the Mosaic dispensation, which has been set aside for one purer, more spiritual, more in consonance with divine mercy." An uninformed, disinterested stranger, to whom both the Nazarene creed and our belief should be utterly unknown, hearing the above stated position so triumphantly assumed by such an immense majority of our neighbours, would hardly hesitate to give us wrong for our opposition, unless we could give convincing counter-arguments to the assertion offered as an undoubted fact, and admitting of no contradiction. Indeed the Nazarenes treat the question as a settled point, and in their arguments with us express the utmost astonishment that we can even dare to hesitate acknowledging our errors and the weakness of our hopes, as they arrogantly affect to call our firm adherence to the One God, and our unshaken confidence in the fulfilment of his promises. If denunciation be proof, and assertion sound argument, then indeed are we conquered; but if Scriptures are to be appealed to, if history is to be consulted, then can we triumphantly defend our cause, and convince even the stranger who has never heard of the word of our God, and the doctrines which some preach erroneously in his blessed Name, that we have the better reason on our side.

Let us take a brief view of the different parts of the idea above thrown out, which, permit me to remark, contains the essence of all that is ever brought forward to convince the Jew of his alleged error; and if it fail of enforcing conviction, the whole argument of the Nazarenes at once falls to the ground, as far at least as the Israelite is concerned. I will also state once for all that the discussion is not entered into, because I deem that our adults require such aid as it is in my power to afford, but to give them means under the blessing of our supreme Father to inculcate the same faith they have received in the minds of their children, and to place the hopes of these on so firm a footing, that they cannot be shaken by the specious arguments of the gentiles, or be misled by the pernicious examples of those who forsake our communion from an alleged conviction of the truth of another belief, or from a criminal indifference to the word and will of the Lord.

To commence: It is fortunate for the world no less than for Israel, that all believers in a divine revelation, of whatever sect or creed, admit as a prerequisite the divine legation of the father of the prophets, and that he was deputed to deliver his fellow-Israelites from bondage; for the admission of these facts places us at once on a firm rock, from which we may start in commencing to trace to their source the nature and effect of the Law of God. For if Moses was divinely inspired to go forward to demand of Pharaoh the liberation of a captive people, and if he was armed by supernatural terrors to effect this noble purpose: it follows that he was faithful and upright, and that whatever he effected in the process of this mission must bear the stamp of divine approbation, or else he would have at the same time been a messenger of God, and displeasing to this great Being by his non-conformity to the will of his Sender. Secondly, seeing that this mission was in behalf of a certain people, and for no other, so far as our knowledge extends, we are naturally led to inquire, "Why was this so? Was it merely to humble the tyrant of Egypt, to assert the cause of universal liberty and equality, or had the whole proceeding another and a deeper motive?" If the former, then there were in olden days, and there are in our own times, communities of slaves equally oppressed as were our forefathers, and, being children of one great Father, ought to be no less the objects of Providence and

Justice than were the Israelites in Egypt; and if even there be no tyrant to doom to death the offspring of the slavish race: there are a thousand chains, a thousand heartburnings, a thousand sufferings connected with a state of absolute servitude, which will not allow the All-Seeing to pass them by unnoticed. And yet, the Israelites alone of all slave nations were redeemed by divine interposition. The answer therefore to our question is evident, that the action of God, through his servant Moses, had for its object another and a higher view than the mere breaking of physical fetters; and this was, as we have asserted on a previous occasion, the disenthralling of the mind of men from the bonds of superstition and unbelief, and to fix a law of truth and righteousness immovably in the hearts of sinning mortals, which law should never thenceforward be banished from the memory and the affections of its first possessors, and that through their silent teachings, as a great spirit* of our people calls it, by their presence on earth as the witnesses of God's truth, they should proclaim the verities, faith and righteousness in their hands to the utmost ends of the earth. We have before this† proved that this procedure on the part of God was both wise and necessary; and all we have now to do, is merely to start from this point as established in the farther pursuit of our inquiry.

What now constitutes the existence of a nation? Some will perhaps answer, the possession of a common country, and the obedience to one government, or at least an association of governments obeying one common head. Another may answer, to constitute a nation, the individuals must be descended from one common origin, and have a uniformity of language and customs. To a certain extent these definitions are correct; and if peradventure any of these characteristics should be wanting at the first formation of a commonwealth, the progress of time and the changes attendant on a propinquity of races, will in an incredibly short period assimilate the different parts of a state in features, manners, and habits (unless there be disturbing causes, arising from climate, and an entire diversity of pursuits), which will render those persons who united to form a state, though very diverse themselves, the parents of a uniform and homogeneous race of descendants. It is needless to quote examples, since the inquiry pursued in its ramifications would carry us too far from our subject. If, then, these points were the sole requisites to form a nation, the words spoken by the Lord through Jeremiah would not have been fulfilled. For thus we read (Jer. xlvi. 27, 28):

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* Mendelssohn, in his "Jerusalem."

† Discourses, vol. ii., Lectures XXX. and XXXII. on the Selection of Israel.

ואתה אל תירא עבדי יעקב ואל תחת ישראל כי
הנני מושעך מרחוק ואת זרעך מארץ שבים ושב
יעקוב ושקט ושאנן ואין מחריד : אתה אל תירא
עבדי יעקב נאם ה׳ כי אתך אני כי אעשה כלה בכל
הגוים אשר הדחתיך שמה ואתך לא אעשה כלה
ויסרתיך למשפט ונקה לא אנקך : ירמיה מו׳ כז׳ כח׳ :

"But thou—O do not fear, my servant Jacob! and be not dismayed, O Israel! for behold, I will surely save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall rest, and shall be at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Thou—do thou not fear, my servant Jacob! saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but of thee I will not make a full end; I will correct thee in judgment, yet not suffer thee to go entirely unpunished "*

We are here told that the Lord would *not* make an end of the nationality of His servant Jacob. But where now is his government? his country? his association of sovereignties? his common head? Where? —O they have been! but now—his children are scattered over every land, wanderers in every clime—oppressed by some, despised by many, and loved by none; and they obey laws which their wise men and their ancients do not recognize as those laws and those ordinances founded on the law of Moses. Their country is desolate and possessed by aliens to their blood, and their kings have long since ceased to rule, and their judges have for ages not sat in the seat of judgment. But who will say, notwithstanding this, that Jacob's sons are not a nation? They are still a people, all must confess, not because in the possession of a common country and one government, but by the possession of one common origin, by the ownership of one law, by the acknowledged providence and rule of One, sole, universal God. And if you look for and meet the descendant of Israel in the icy regions of the pole, or where a burning sun sends down his perpendicular rays on the desolate and heated sands of equatorial Africa—in every spot upon God's earth—he will tell you that he is linked in spirit and descent to that hapless nation who have so long borne the obloquy, and the contempt, and the galling yoke which the ignorance and malevolence of gentiles have inflicted on them. And ask him, why he so submits to these national evils? he will tell you, it is because he confides in the truth of his God, because he does not believe that the All-wise could waver in his counsel and enact a new law, when He had declared the ordinances of Moses to be the statutes which He had ordained for the perpetual government of his chosen people. In this then exists our nationality, in the possession of one religion, uniform in its main features all over the world, and in our cherishing the consanguinity inherent to our descent from the Patriarchs, and inasmuch as we are sedulous to contract matrimonial alliances with those only who are, like us, obedient to the same religious code, and descended from the same common stock. If, then, it is admitted that we were at one time, however remote, the chosen people of God, it is also admitted that we thereby, that is to say, by our being chosen as a divine people, were constituted the guardians of a divine law; for this alone, as we have briefly exhibited, could have been the meaning of the prophecy which we have quoted for our text; since, when Jeremiah prophesied these words, he also foretold the downfall of our national government, and his promise of the permanence of the nation could accordingly refer only to *spiritual* advantages which were to endure when—and long, long after, all the physical or outward features of a state had been entirely obliterated. In other words, the Israelites were constituted a nation to continue thus through a state of political exaltation, and through seasons of entire political subversion.

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* Or, as rendered by others, "But never destroy thee altogether."

In truth the Nazarenes confess this to be the fact, by saying that salvation came through Israel, by which they can only mean, that through the promulgation of the law to our ancestors, in the first instance, the knowledge of the way of salvation was at length carried to the gentiles, who are now enjoying the light of religion which was formerly exclusively ours. Without gainsaying in the least the truth of this assertion, since we are not disposed to deny to any human being the hope of salvation in the Lord, by the pursuit of the right so far as this is known to him: we cannot assent to the deduction, which the gentiles make, that their admission to grace has caused our rejection. First, because the gentiles never were excluded from divine mercy, from the calling of Abraham down to this hour. Many no doubt forfeited everlasting bliss by their manifold transgressions against the light they had received, and in contravention to the truths which had been made known to mankind from the beginning; but this does not say that there was any inherent defect in the spirit of the gentile from enjoying the rewards to which his virtues, be they many or few, might have entitled him from the impartial Judge of all flesh. The law, we admit, was given to be the road of salvation to Israel, in the first instance, and to become the beacon to the other nations of the earth thereafter; but it was intended solely to bind our people to the strict observance of its letter and spirit, and not to condemn to eternal sorrows those who had never been informed of its nature and tenets. The Lord gave his commandments to be obeyed to everlasting, to remove through them, by certain though slow degrees, the empire of sin and evil; yet He never doomed to destruction those who, by a long course of misrule and accumulated ignorance for which they were nowise to blame, had not learned to fear his great and adorable Name. Secondly, even granting, for argument's sake, that until a certain fixed period the gentiles had been excluded from God's mercy, which we cannot admit: still we are constrained to affirm, that their admission to favour can on no account have wrought our expulsion from the mansion of our Father! Is not his power far-reaching enough to extend over each and all of his creatures? Is his goodness limited, that it needs must be exhausted unless *some* are doomed to unhappiness? Is his wisdom so short-sighted, that his laws are insufficient to speak to every soul—to subdue every heart to fear and to love Him?—Not so are we permitted to set limits to his bounty and benevolence; and if man can occasionally forgive his enemies and pray for those who have grievously transgressed against him: will you deny to the All-good, the Possessor of all perfection, the power, the capacity, the disposition, the will to be good to all? Is this your conception of your Maker's greatness, that you give Him less perfection than is possessed by a mortal creature?—No! no! brethren; God's love is ample for all; his wings are sufficiently extended that all may seek shelter under their shadow; his forgiveness is not exhausted if even every creature were forgiven and enjoying everlasting happiness; and whilst we believe this, we cannot imagine, much less believe, that the acceptance into favour of the gentiles has wrought injury to the children of the house of Israel.

"But," say the advocates of our rejection, "it is not because God is not able to save, only because you refused and still refuse the salvation which was offered to you. The thirsty man cannot complain of the effect of water not slaking his thirst, if he refuses to drink." Let us now inquire, What have we rejected? Have we rejected the law? Do we as a people refuse studying or obeying the commandments?—Assuredly not? with faces covered with the blush of shame we must indeed confess that we have sinned as our fathers have done before us; but never can it be said, that we as an entire body have rejected the law. If then our transgressions during the ages of the prophets were punished with mild though condign punishment (for everything is mild compared to entire annihilation), as a retributive measure for the infraction of the covenant of God with Israel: it is wonderful indeed that anything could have occurred more heinous, more subversive of our duties as a people and individuals, than the general idolatry at one time so prevalent for a space of several centuries. Now we read in the awful denunciation of Moses in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, that the spirit of prophecy anticipated such a state of rebellion; for he says (verse 30): "And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun-images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you;" thus evidently indicating that the direful rebellion of forgetfulness of God should be followed by the signal punishment of the sinners and the downfall of the idols they would worship, and God is represented as saying that his soul would abhor the daring rebels. Now hear what the prophet says in continuation (verses 43–45): "The land also shall be left (desolate) of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lies desolate without them, and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgments, and my statutes their souls abhorred. And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. But I will remember unto them the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth from the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord." The sin, the punishment, and the mercy are all here recited; and still the promise of an everlasting covenant is held out. And for what was the punishment denounced? For a disregard of the statutes and judgments of the law, which would imply, that there will follow favour and mercy if the Israelites were to obey these statutes and judgments. Not to speak of the blissful promise that our greatest sinning should not cause utter rejection: we will confine ourselves to the consideration of the unjewish doctrine that obedience to the law should not be able to insure salvation, unless something else were to be superadded. Let us inquire of our opponents, what that something is? They will, as you all know, tell us, it is the belief in a mediator, who is to atone for our sins; since no man is righteous under the law, and he requires a purification and a sacrificing process beyond what his own deeds can attain; and since we in former times rejected the mediator, when he is said to have appeared, and as professing Jews yet continue to reject him, they will make us believe that we are by this unbelief condemned to the abhorrence of the Lord, even to utter spiritual condemnation, both nationally and individually. Before we go to argue the question upon its remote merits, such as consistency with divine goodness and mercy, we will bring it down to the standard of Scripture; and we will ask, with all due deference to the many learned and pious professing Nazarenes, to point out to us a single passage in the whole five books of Moses which even remotely teaches the doctrine of a mediator, or which hints that any other atonement is needed than a man's own acts, done in obedience to and in reliance upon divine wisdom and mercy. It will not do to assert that this doctrine is taught by inference and obscure allusions; for in a matter concerning our final beatitude or condemnation, the merciful Father of all creatures would not leave doubt or obscurity to perplex us in our course through life. We have plain and ample directions for our belief in one God, the Author and Preserver of all things; we have express injunction regarding our own course of life as children of God, as descendants from human parentage, and as members of a community of intelligent beings like ourselves, nay, in many instances regarding our conduct towards the brute creation; and is it to be believed that, if our salvation depended upon a belief in a mediator, this idea would not have been clearly and distinctly laid down in the ten commandments along with the injunction to acknowledge the Creator?—Moreover, what Israelite, from the mission of Moses to the destruction of the second temple, ever believed in an adjunct deity? and, consequently, if such a belief were necessary to salvation, no one of all the Bible personages could have been saved, no matter what might have been his piety or the favour with which he was regarded by his Maker.—But what does this hypothesis mean? Nothing else than that the Lord had given a law which, while in appearance it was a means of salvation, failed in its effect; since there was another requisite which it does not enjoin, yet without which all obedience to it is in vain. Is this reasonable? can the Lord be so unjust, so cruel towards those He alleges to love? Moreover, this view would be disconsonant with Scriptures; since in many passages we read to the following effect, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." (Lev. xviii. 5.) "And when Moses had made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel, he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, that you may command them your children to observe to do all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it." (Deut. xxxii. 45–47.) With these extracts the proofs are not exhausted; but enough for the present to establish the biblical doctrine that no mediator is required to obtain for us salvation; on the contrary, we are taught that the law, which is to insure our life, is neither in heaven nor beyond sea, so that a mediator or messenger need be sent to fetch it, but is in our mouths and our hearts, that we may do it. We repeat therefore the question, How can the Jews have been rejected from divine grace, so that whilst adhering firmly to the law which was intrusted to them, they should earn eternal condemnation, simply because they do not admit a doctrine which their Scriptures do not contain?

In this point of the argument, it is possible we may be met by the bold assertion of our antagonists (I use this word as referring only to a mere friendly difference), that granting the old dispensation of the law—so they term our code—did not contain the doctrine of a sacrificed mediator, a new and purer revelation, which unfettered the world from the curse of bodily obedience, made known a safer and easier method of sanctification, by teaching the sinner not to regard himself or his deeds as of any avail, but to throw himself upon the merits of one who had assumed both the curse of the condemnation under the law, pronounced against Adam, and removed the disqualification attendant thereon by his voluntary death in expiation of original sin.—I state the substance of the doctrine in its strongest bearings. Indeed, if this view were scriptural, then might Israel tremble; for by having rejected both the person and the assistance of the alleged great personage whom the Nazarenes call their messiah, or mediator, or by what other name he may be known, they would of necessity have rejected the only means of salvation. But, brethren, there is, there can be no dispensation from the Lord differing in aught, even one iota or one tittle, from the law of Moses! For what is God? is He a son of man, that He should repent? can He be uncertain in his purposes? wavering in his will? Did He give a law to

Moses, declare it to be eternal, and yet limit its duration to less than two thousand years, when a thousand years are in his sight like a yesterday that passeth and a watch in the night? Can this be the God who spoke thus through his servant: "And know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Lord is the God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath; there is none else" (Deut. iv. 39)? Ay, "THERE IS NONE ELSE!" these are the words, the consolatory assurance of the Most High himself. What do they mean, but that beside the Lord, *the* God of Israel, there is no being to share his power, his glory, his saving mercy? Upon whom then does the law bid us to rely for salvation? The same Power who announced himself to Moses, when the prophet asked by what name he was to call his Sender when speaking to the Israelites, "I shall be who I shall be." And again, "The everlasting One, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac (as was told to Israel when reposing in his prophetic vision), and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." And how was this everlasting, eternal Being to be viewed? Here again the Scriptures come to our aid: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one," one, sole, omnipotent, working all, creating all, ruling all, and saving all. Is there a possibility of an adjunct, an associate, an assistant, a being between God and man? Again the law speaks in farther confirmation, when the prophet in his last song, delivered probably on the day of his death, foretells the fearful effects of the apostacy, which his mind's eye foresaw and greatly dreaded; he introduces the Deity as speaking, denouncing punishment for rebellion, and as then continuing: "See now, that I, I alone am He, and there is no god with me; I, I kill and I bring to life, I wound and I heal, and there is no one can deliver from my hand. I lift up my hands to heaven, and say, As sure as I live for ever." (Deut. xxxii. 39, 40.) Do we need farther proof? then let us once more refer to the unfailing guide we have always at hand: "And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations whither the Lord will lead you.—And if you will seek thence the Lord thy God, thou wilt find *Him*, if thou wilt seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." (Deut. iv. 27, 29.)—All these concurrent texts, scattered through the Pentateuch, explain one the other, and all reject as impossible the idea of a sacrifice beyond the person of the sinner himself: "I wound and I heal, and there is no one can deliver from my hand;" where, we would ask, is an exception? if the Lord, the everlasting *He* condemns, if He wounds, who can absolve, who can heal? We are promised deliverance by returning from our evil ways; yet whom shall we seek? again, "the Lord our God," who announces himself as "One" and "living for ever."

But, say the Nazarenes, "Your law is but a type, a foreshadowing of more glorious things that were to follow." Without at present discussing the truth or otherwise of this singular position, we will merely confine ourselves to a single remark. Admitting for a moment the impossible and not-to-be-thought-of idea, that the unchanging God had communicated a law which in its nature was so imperfect that it required to be changed: it would still solely apply to ordinances to be done and prohibitions to be avoided; for these only could by any chance be objects of repeal or change. Yet how does this affect the truths of revelation? Can the Lord repeal his own unchangeableness? can He cease to be one? can He at one time be the sole Saviour, and require an adjunct at another? can He in the least divest himself of one, nay, the smallest prerogative of universal royalty in favour of another? can, in short, the holy, the everlasting, uniform, unchanging, saving, redeeming God cease to be less than this in any manner whatever? A truth is an idea which cannot be controverted; it embraces something which is so and not otherwise by any change of circumstance, time, or place. Now if God at any one time, either past or present, nay, even future, embraced or should embrace any attribute whatever, this same attribute must have been his from the commencement, and cannot be changed to all eternity. We therefore demand the proof: Where does the law teach us to pray through a mediator, or rather does not the law strenuously prohibit any such system of idolatry? No proof can be exhibited, for there exists none, that God meant to divest himself of a portion of his power, admit it even as possible; and whilst the law is silent, we cannot believe that another revelation, gainsaying it in so important a particular, can be of divine origin. Consequently the fears they would influence us with, who say that we are condemned, because we rejected the person and mission of their mediator, are idle and groundless; for we are commanded over and again: "The Lord thy God shalt thou fear, and Him shalt thou serve;

to Him shalt thou cleave, and by his name shalt thou swear!" Yes, brethren! to Him will we cleave; come weal, come woe—be the world friendly or frowning—be the name of Israel loved or hated—be Jacob's sons many or few—they who fear the Lord, the One, the Eternal, the Undying, the Unchanging, will swear by his *name*, and call Him their Father—their Friend—their Life—their Redeemer.

A holier God than the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, cannot be imagined; a more evident revelation of his will than was proclaimed from Sinai never was witnessed; and consequently a system more pure and holy than that embraced in the Mosaic code cannot, does not exist. Away then with the appeal so shamelessly addressed to us to forsake this code for any other, say if you will, it even be purer;—away! tempt us not with your wealth, your power, your matrimonial alliances with your great families: they are unworthy of its light who forsake the law which is ours; and only with its extinction can the lamp of Jacob be quenched.

Again says the Nazarene, "If it be as you say, that there is but one God and one law given by this God, how is it that you, its followers, are so scattered, so long oppressed, so long without priest or prophet, temple or sacrifice? Is not your dispersion a positive proof of your rejection from grace? Is it not more than likely that before many centuries have elapsed the names of Jacob and Israel will only belong to history as things that have been?" But we answer: Had we never sinned, then would dispersion never have been sent as a visitation over us; but had we sinned and we been left flourishing and at peace in our own land, while we defiled it with our abominations: then would the word of God not have been true. When we sinned, it was absolutely requisite that punishment should be meted out, and the punishment threatened was the scattering of our race among the gentiles from one end of the earth to the other. The punishment has been literally accomplished thus far; yet withal it was told that in the land of our enemies the Lord's covenant would remain steadfast and unmoved with us. Has this been so? We appeal to history, to the experience of every age and country, to confirm the well-foundedness of our trust and confidence. Have not ages of sorrow, of trial, of temptation passed over us without consuming us? History answers, Yes; and shall we then become faint-hearted now, when we are at peace? Shall we despair after so many centuries of sorrow, fearful to confide in the Lord's promises? Many may perhaps be weary of bearing the name which marks them children of a hated, crushed, and despised people; but there are many—millions compared to hundreds—who would embrace the burning stake, who would welcome the blow of the bared sword, sooner than swerve from the acknowledgment of the UNITY of God which they have inherited from their fathers—sooner than forsake the law which was proclaimed from heaven by the omnipotent voice of the undying God! Indifference to the commandments is not a new thing among us; it is this which has twice ruined our temple, twice scattered the dwellers of Palestine as slaves and outcasts over all the earth; and yet every period of forgetfulness was followed by one of love for the law. Can it be otherwise now? Will not a better spirit awaken in the souls of our people, when this age of worldliness has passed away? Assuredly—if there be truth in the word of God—and if even many or all of us pass away, before this revival takes place, take place it will, and we never need to dread the extinction of a people which has so long, so faithfully, so unshrinkingly been the witness of God's power, mercy, and providence. The prophets no longer speak among us; but the prophetic treasures are not forgotten, and if we have no priests nor temple, then is the Lord our refuge, our sanctuary, and our atonement. This is the permanence of his word; and when the appointed time arrives, then will the restoration of all the blessings not be wanting, and then will be fulfilled the words we have quoted for our text, and which we will repeat as a fit conclusion for our to-day's contemplation: "But thou —O do not fear, my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel! for behold, I will surely save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall rest, and shall be at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Thou—do thou not fear, my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but of thee I will not make a full end: I will correct thee in judgment, yet not suffer thee to go entirely unpunished."

O Lord God! indeed we know that our rebellion has called down upon us thy wrath and indignation, yet have we not forsaken entirely thy covenant; and Thou, O our Father! hast also done according to thy promise, and not broken with us the oath Thou hast sworn to our fathers. Let our prayers then ascend to Thee, and bless the outcasts of Israel with thy grace and peace; and let us here in thy house welcome many, many years of reunion in heart and soul, on the day when these doors were first opened to admit the worshippers of thy name at this shrine. And let none be ever wanting here to defend the truth Thou hast given us, and may this endure until the captives shall return to Zion with songs of triumph and joy because of thy renewed goodness through thy servant David. Amen.

Shebat 3d. } 5602.
Jan. 14th. }

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE ISRAELITISH NATION.

Lord of glory! shine forth in thy majesty over thy people, and let thy blessed spirit be with them in all their dwellings, and cause them to be invigorated by the thoughts of wisdom beaming forth from thy law, and to be guided aright on the dark path of their pilgrimage by the truth which is dwelling only in the records of thy words, which Thou didst proclaim unto us through thy servant in the presence of all Israel. Amen.

Brethren!

It is our boastful privilege to call ourselves sons of

Israel, descendants from the patriarchs; we claim with undeniable justice to be the inheritors of a glorious name than which none more honourable was ever borne by any individual or people. Ages have rolled on, and still through good and through evil report there have always been found men and women who gloried in the name of Jacob, who thanked with heartfelt gratitude the Lord of all, that He had not made their portions like the families of the earth, nor their lot like that of all their multitude. We bless the Lord daily in our prayers that He, by his wise providence, exempted us from the unfortunate state of idolatry and false belief, by the bestowal of his law, the precepts of which are the emanation of his wisdom and goodness; and we deem our lot a happy one, when we cast our eyes around us or turn our view to history and find that, whilst many nations have obtained a partial knowledge of the truth, and others are yet groping in entire mental blindness, we have alone a clear conception of the highest wisdom which the greatest unaided human intellect has ever failed of attaining. We feel, indeed, that our law is from God, and that we are his chosen instruments to preserve it unto the end of days.

At a time, when we lived together in one common country, governed by the very law which the Lord had given us, our superiority over the other nations, who were our neighbours all around us, was manifest enough at a first glance even; nay this was the case at that very time when we were so foolishly bent upon imitating the follies of the gentiles; for in every age there were found those unwavering heroes in the faith of their forefathers who by their unswerving rectitude made the sinners ashamed, and shook by their fervid eloquence and their bold denunciation the throne of tyrants who unworthily filled the royal seat of David. But now a change has for many years past come over the face of our national glory; we have been taken from out of the bounds of our inheritance and carried away unto every clime of the earth, and scattered in small numbers and unimportant communities into every land which would open its boundaries for our reception, which did not disdain to let the fugitives from the once great Palestine rest awhile, and to allow them to be refreshed from the great slaughter which the enemies of their name had wrought in the very precincts of their temple, at the foot of the altar of their God.—And not alone this; but the very people who have been healed through our bruises, and who have been brought to the partial knowledge of the Lord by our sufferings, now claim a superiority over us as being more in the pale of divine favour, and brand our religion as the result of error and misapprehension of the law of God. If now we are cowards in the cause which has been surrendered to our defence, if we are faint-hearted in the service which our Master demands of us, we will naturally become recreants to our trust, an easy prey to the enemies of Israel. But in this trial of our strength and faith one thing is preëminently obligatory on us, as a prerequisite to all else, that is, we are on no account to look upon ourselves as degraded for no better cause than that others say so; we ourselves must not look upon the name of Jew, Hebrew or Israelite as something to be ashamed of, for the best of all reasons,—because there is absolutely nothing why we need to blush to be designated by either or all of them. The odium which some attach to our present designation, the title Jew, is only a remnant of that barbarism which formerly doomed the possessors thereof to an ignominious death and to every contumely which malevolence could invent, for no other reason than because they refused to embrace the opinions of the majority, their inferiors in every thing save in the possession of political power, with regard to religious opinions and observances. What then made the word Jew a byword of reproach? any thing intrinsically attached to it? any crime or bodily or mental inferiority belonging to or chargeable upon its possessors? Certainly not; they, who persecuted our people for no valid cause, at last began or at least affected to despise them as inferior to the lordly and favoured race among whom they dwelt. Persecution thus produced scorn, and scorn in its turn was then made the pretext for farther outrage. Whom does this procedure stamp as inferior? Those who, from a relentless spirit of bigotry, maltreated a people who never offended, and whose deplorable condition demanded the commiseration of every feeling heart,—or those who, despite of unmerited sufferings which, from their magnitude seemed almost too much for human nature to bear, adhered the closer to those truths and those laws from keeping which originated all their sufferings and sorrows? And say if you will that in process of time the long-endured contumely and abhorrence produced at length a degree of slavish cringing, a certain species of double-dealing towards, and an inward hatred of, the oppressors: still can this be wondered at? is this not the natural result of outrages against human rights? do you expect that the wretch who writhes under the lash of your inflictions will turn round and kiss reverentially your bloodstained hand? do you imagine that the wrongfully enchained patriot will love in his heart the cruel tyrant who dooms him to death for daring to uphold the rights of his country? or do you believe that man will not cringe and submit seemingly to your contempt when by such conduct he may hope to escape from your cruelty, which otherwise he is sure will reach his exposed head? Even grant, that a long state of degradation at last taught the Hebrew to disregard, in some instances, the laws of honesty and fair dealing, so far as his persecutors were concerned: still, can you wonder that this should be? did not your rapacity teach him to remunerate himself for the unceasing rapine to which he was exposed? how else could he supply the constant demand for contributions from your kings, and priests, and lords, unless he had a hoard of gold at hand to satisfy their unquenchable cravings? And then let us reflect that without exculpating ourselves or denying in aught the charges of this nature brought against us, they are chiefly drawn from the chronicles of those who themselves persecuted us; and it is not claiming too much for the honour of our name to say, that the sufferings of Israel have not been overrated, whilst their crimes and faults have been fully exposed. Nay, even admit that many ages of inflicted inferiority have at length produced a natural inferiority; that, having been long trodden upon, the Jew has lost all noble aspirings after better things than mere traffic and petty gain: is this sufficient to make us ashamed of our brothers of Israel? If the oppression of a whole world, if the contempt of mankind, have crushed their spirit and extinguished every spark of a high-souled ambition: then let us sit down contentedly with them, let us at least not shun intercourse with them, if by providential blessing we should happen to be possessed of a better lot, if we should inwardly feel the burning of a desire for distinction which they do not have. For what were the best of us not many years back? but the very outcasts from the rights of man which the greater part of our people is to this day; and if perchance wealth or distinguished services gave any one a temporary importance, he was nevertheless excluded in almost every country from the enjoyment of the rights of citizenship, and he had in many lands to purchase a limited protection, literally to purchase it at an exorbitant price at the hands of the rulers. And if now in several states we are considered equals in the eyes of the law; if there a more liberal treatment enkindles in us the long dormant feeling after nobler aspirations than yet contents those who still suffer from the maltreatment of undeserved persecution for opinion's sake: we should be the last to despise our unfortunate brothers, or to disown our alliance with them. Instead of contempt, they deserve our warmest admiration, that under all the disadvantages of poverty, of oppression, of exclusion from power, and debarment from elegant literature; that despite of every advantage offered them formerly, and to this very day, if they would but cast off their spiritual allegiance to the Jewish laws and rites, they have adhered firmly to their ancestral institutions, defending them without the power of the sword and the shield against the rude assault of barbarous kings, of relentless priests, and the ceaseless hatred of an excited and ignorant multitude. And if they or their sons appear among us in this or in any other free country, loaded perhaps with the opprobrium attached to mean and degraded occupations; if they love not those branches of industry which were till lately utterly denied them; if they have vices which oppression is but too apt to fasten upon the oppressed: then let us step forward, take them affectionately by the hand, make them feel that they are indeed our brothers, and let us elevate them with God's blessing from the state of degradation into which they have been cast; awaken in them a love of industry and of mental enlightenment; and it is not saying too much, that only a short time will elapse before they will bear a favourable comparison with the other inhabitants of the land.

In the above, we have assumed the worst possible state as the position of our people; we have taken as true the pictures of degradation which our bitterest enemies and our persecutors, as they would gladly be, if the mercy of God did not restrain them, present of us; and still we have briefly shown that no Israelite need be ashamed of his people even as they now are said to exist. But we do not admit that we are so degraded. If we have our national faults, we have also our virtues. In the midst of all the corruption and the love of gain entailed upon us as the bitter fruits of persecution, we always maintained the character of an intelligent, sober, moral, and frugal people.

And when the universities and high-schools were closed to us, we then diligently applied ourselves to the wisdom contained in our religion, and the ingenuity which was prohibited from unfolding itself in the field of scientific discovery, found ample employment in elucidating the mysteries of religion and to meditate on the ways of our eternal Father. Though in this manner doubtless much learning was uselessly spent upon unnecessary argumentations and too refined disputes: it nevertheless is an evidence that the genius of Israel would not suffer itself to rust away idly and neglected as a thing of no value. Being shut out from scientific pursuits, it is no wonder that many of our predecessors at length disregarded them as of no importance in the acquisition of a true knowledge of what concerns the immortal spirit; and hence may have arisen a prejudice with some of our nation against the use of secular sciences, although now they are open to us in every civilized country. Men, therefore, who, notwithstanding their limited field of inquiry, devoted their lives to study and contemplation, justly acquired a widely extended influence over the minds and affairs of the Jewish communities in which they lived, especially as they by their sterling piety were regarded with reverence by all their brethren, and were not rarely called upon to decide contests arising between Israelites without any resort to the courts of justice, where proceedings are not conducted upon the simple rules of Jewish jurisprudence.—Of men like these, the most enlightened modern philosopher need not be ashamed to claim them as compatriots; for if he even be more fully acquainted with things unknown to them: still he may boast of them as men who unswervingly, and often in poverty, and not rarely in loathsome dungeons, bore their righteous testimony to the unity of God and the truth and permanence of his law. Their example, moreover, had a wonderful effect upon the people whose leaders they were; and a love of religion was always maintained supreme in the heart of the humblest Israelite, and a scrupulous adherence was produced which is well calculated to astonish the most profound observer. And in the train of this deep-rooted conformity followed the kindred virtues of love of order and a proverbial sobriety, to which were added an almost profuse charity towards the needy, and a deep reverential deference to parental authority; and it is but a rare sight indeed to see a Jew asking for alms from the stranger, and offences against the person, such as murder and violence, are instances of but unfrequent occurrence compared to our numbers and the extent of time and surface which they occupy. Such, in brief, has been the state of the Jews, notwithstanding the debasing influences to which they have been exposed; and therefore no one who has any self-respect need to blush for his fraternity with a race which has so nobly, so unflinchingly, supported itself amidst calamities and occurrences, the tithe of which conquered the spirit, subdued and crushed the mind of every other people similarly situated, save it be the descendants of Jacob themselves. Why then should we hesitate to avow our origin? when any one asks us "What is your belief?" are we to equivocate or attempt to conceal what should be our glory? our boast? our pride? why should we seek to hide from the world that we are followers of the Law of Moses, servants of the God of Jacob, seeing that thereby we stamp ourselves as connected with a line of martyrs to truth, compared to whom the hero who defies death at the mouth of the cannon is a child, a coward?—Far then be such baseness from us! on the contrary, let us on every occasion boldly avow our descent, and prove by our conduct that we are not unworthy to enjoy amidst peace and freedom a legacy of truth and holiness, which was preserved undefiled in the confusion and dismay attendant upon persecution and exile. But independently of every other consideration let us view the question of the open and candid avowal of our belief and descent in this light. If there be odium resting upon our name, from any reasonable cause, then let us endeavour to provide a remedy by which the evil can be speedily and readily removed. But if, on the contrary, there be no valid reason for the foul blot which our enemies have attempted to fasten upon the honoured name we bear: then it becomes evidently our duty to throw back the scorn which is cast upon us, and to prefer to remain unnoticed in the midst of the communities where we live, rather than buy a secondary importance in society, in countries where we are equals, by a tame submission to insult, or by studiously keeping out of sight that we are Jews, members of the people whom the majority of our neighbours do not love, because they cannot acquiesce in the religious opinions of those who borrowed their religion and philosophy from them. This course of action involves no relinquishment of the duties of citizenship, no abandonment of the offices of kindness towards those differing from us in opinion; the person who speaks to you now has himself received too many acts of kindness from persons of different shades of belief ever to be on his part the advocate of illiberality, a procedure as abhorrent to his feelings, as it is contrary to the religion of Israel. Only this was meant to be conveyed: that we should insist upon the unobstructed enjoyment of our natural and unalienable rights, and not disgrace ourselves by tacitly admitting, either by word or deed, that we are in aught inferior as professors of a peculiar faith to the rest of our fellow-citizens. And if they will not recognize our rights, if they are determined to continue to annoy us by exciting or expressing odium against us, as said, merely because we are Jews; if they endeavour to raise means to promote our conversion to a faith which we do not believe in; if they tamper with our children or those among us who happen to be ignorant of the arguments which we possess in abundance: then it is evidently our duty either to meet boldly these shameless attempts upon our rights and privileges, or if this be impossible, the only other remedy is a quiet seclusion and an unobtrusive course of conduct, till we shame into a retraction those who have unjustly assailed us.

It is almost needless to inform you that intrinsically there is nothing degrading in either of the names by which we are called. The name of *Jew* is derived from *Judah*, the tribe to which David belonged, and was used as early as the reign of Hezekiah, to designate the people composing the kingdom of Judah, consisting of the tribe of that name, and the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, in contradistinction of the kingdom of Israel, composed of the remaining tribes. The derivation of the word יהודה is from the two words אודה יה, "I will thank the Lord," which was the expression of Leah when her fourth son was born. From this proper name *Yehudah* is made the generic one of *Yehudi*, which has by a contraction, not unusual in transmissions, from one language to another, been changed into the term Jew; and consequently there is nothing in the appellation in itself which should render it one of reproach by any known rules of interpretation. The name *Israel* or ישראל is a by-name given to our forefather Jacob, and is likewise a compound noun from שר a chief, and אל God, or a "Divine chief," and it was conferred upon the patriarch to designate the favour with which he was regarded by the Lord, and it was given him at a time when he had miraculously contended with an angel. —And at last the word *Hebrew* עברי was the name applied to Abraham when in Palestine, as denoting the one who had come from the other side of the river Euphrates, which was the country whence he emigrated to Palestine; or, as some suppose, because he was a descendant from *Eber* עבר, the fifth in descent from Noah, and one of the ancestors of Abraham. It will be evident that all of these three titles are honourable in their original acceptation, and nothing but the ignorance of our persecutors could ever have made them terms of reproach. This being the case, our duty as regards our religious connexions becomes obvious. We must so live as to restore the lost honour, if indeed it be lost, to our national appellation, and take a pleasure in claiming affinity both in acts of kindness and religious associations with those, who, equally with us, are descended from the same common stock; and we may rest assured of one thing, that the gentiles will at the last honour us for displaying so proper a self-respect; and in this, no less than every instance of life, it holds true, that no one can expect of right the esteem and regard of others, who is base enough to deny his own descent, and who has not sufficient respect for his own fair fame and his personal rights, to preserve the one from any unjust aspersion, and the others from any and every assault which can be made upon them, be the offenders who they may.

But it is not enough for our salvation that we avow ourselves Jews, that we be Israelites in our hearts, and that we give our aid and countenance to others of Hebrew descent. This would be idle boasting, in truth valuing a thing of no actual value. For if we merely covet the name of Jew, if we only glorify ourselves for our honourable descent, and neglect the duties which such descent imperiously demands of us: we have nothing in our possession to distinguish us outwardly from other members of the community around us. If we eat the food which they eat, if we go to the temples whither they resort, if we rest on the days when they rest, if we only pray in a language in which they pray: we are evidently not distinguishable from them in aught, unless it be our features, which are not different in many cases from those of other men. And unless our neighbours are right in all they do, unless their food be lawful for us to eat, their temples the places where the truth is taught, their resting day the one appointed by the Lord, their language the speech of Israel: we cannot be justified in adopting their manners, or following their example. No, if our heart feels, then should our acts speak out our feelings; if we glory in the possession of the law, we should display an entire surrender of our will to its dictates.—In our intercourse with the world we will no doubt be frequently invited to sit down to the social meal with our gentile friends; should we now truly be sensible of what is expected from us, we shall feel ourselves called upon not to partake of what our law prohibits. We may perhaps be called unsociable; but what is that to us? we have received divine ordinances which we are bound to obey, and nothing, save the most insuperable necessity, can in the least absolve us from the prohibition. Some may feel a degree of false shame at their seeming unreasonableness in declining to eat what is put before them; but a simple reference to the commandments must be answer enough to any intelligent non-Israelite, and any unpleasant feeling, which might momentarily have been excited by the apparent refusal to partake of the proffered hospitality, will speedily be allayed, when it is made evident that this refusal is based upon conscientious grounds. We will not suppose that original indifference to religion is the first impulse to transgression, as we now refer merely to the duties which the sincere Israelite has to observe, and one who deserves this appellation will necessarily look upon all the precepts of Scriptures of equal authority and bindingness. But even such a one may not have moral courage enough to avow boldly in his conduct what he conceives to be the truth in theory; and to him therefore we will address ourselves and tell him, that moral cowardice as the motive of transgression is no shield against punishment, no bar to accountability; and moreover that it is highly unreasonable, since the dread of worldly consequences is futile, and the exhibition of a little firmness in the outset is all that is required to make the path of duty easy and pleasant, in every similar circumstance which may afterwards occur.

To the churches of those dissenting from us we are not permitted to go, and to worship there; the order observed in them is not the service which was given to us; the Deity is not invoked, as we are taught by our prophets, and the doctrines held forth in the most liberal of them all are obnoxious to their being not in agreement with our received mode of scriptural interpretation. I do not mean to say, that the morality preached by our gentile neighbours is otherwise than pure and holy, or that they teach aught else than the deepest reverence for the Supreme Being. God forbid that I should so far forget what is due to truth and candour. All I mean to say is this. A dissentient church is no place for the habitual resort of a Jew, whence he is to carry away his ideas of God, of duty, and of the approaching future. It is dangerous, especially for the uninformed, to hear his own people denounced as walking in error and darkness, as being out of the pale of divine mercy, for certain deeds and the rejection of certain opinions, which when admitted as truths would destroy at once the existence of the Jewish people. His ear must be offended, or else his faith must be wavering, to perceive the remnant of Israel prayed for, not that the divine protection might be vouchsafed to them as formerly, that the Lord might be pleased to let his glory dwell again in Zion, but that they might be turned away from their ancient path to walk in the light of a dispensation which we can never admit as of any authority, while we have the least reverence for the ordinances of the Bible, and which can only take place at our entire annihilation.—Let us look at the doctrines propounded. Of God they say that He needs a mediator to shield man from everlasting condemnation; we, however, are taught to regard Him alone as all in all, as all-sufficient to create and to save. Of our duties they say, that by a new dispensation, though without any public manifesting of the divine glory, all the positive injunctions of ceremonial religion have been abrogated, nay that in the moral institutes a vital change has been made; now we cannot acquiesce in any such teaching, since we claim permanence and unchangeableness for the word of God. Lastly, with regard to the future, their doctrine of the messiah is such that we cannot recognize it to be the view entertained of this august messenger by the prophets of Israel. In short, though mere morality can be acquired from gentile teachers, religion proper is not in their power to bestow on those who like us believe in One God, in the permanence of the Law, and in the blissful coming of the son of David. It is not, however, meant to be conveyed, that an occasional attendance without the idea of partaking in worship, merely to hear the peculiarity of a different belief clearly exhibited by one every way capable of doing it justice, is sinful; not so; I speak of a constant repairing or a frequent attendance for the purpose of listening to heterodox sermons, which will naturally cause a loosening of the ties which bind us to our religion. It is a dangerous self-confidence to suppose that a frequent hearing of any peculiar doctrine will not have any sensible effect upon us; if it does not enforce new ideas, it will to a certainty weaken old impressions, unless indeed we are well fortified by a high degree of knowledge and a deep-seated humble faith in the Word of God. A great deal more remains to be said on this subject; but I must defer it to a future occasion. In brief it may be very proper occasionally to go and hear what our religious opponents have to say, for two reasons, the one that we may be able to fortify ourselves in our own views and to ward off the attacks which may be made unawares upon our members, which would evidently be out of our power, if we were entirely unacquainted with the ideas which others entertain on the momentous subject of religion, and the arguments they make use of to fortify their position; and secondly, to show that we are not blind believers, who are unwilling and afraid to investigate for themselves; since our religion is emphatically one that can bear the test of exposure and has millions of arguments to prove its truth and holiness. But we must not yield from weakness, from fear of offending, or for the sake of appearing in fashionable meeting-houses, to the solicitation of our friends to accompany them frequently to their places of worship; for this compliance can lead to no good results, and may produce abundance of evil to our spiritual welfare. It is not illiberality which is to teach us this course of conduct, but a decent consistency and self-respect; for by a frequent attendance on such preaching as just mentioned we confess that we have not sufficient moral instruction of our own, and that we needs must seek for light from those who confessedly have borrowed from us. And if there actually be a deficiency of such teaching among us, which I cannot deny, to a great extent at least, it is evidently our duty, and should be our pleasure, to remove the evil, and place ourselves upon an equality in respect to religious instruction; since we are undoubtedly equal as regard religious truths with our neighbours.

Another subject I deem it my duty to touch upon in connexion with the above. It is a melancholy fact, that there are persons whose moral vision is so perverted, that they go about sapping the foundation of all positive religion; they go so far as to erect halls for the spreading of their peculiar views, and there gather hearers around them, and in flowing and smooth speeches tell their auditories, that all religion is fable, and the unphilosophical invention of designing men. It exceeds my comprehension to understand what benefit such declaimers propose to themselves or society at large. It is needless for me to appear as the champion of the advantages which the religion of the Bible confers upon society, and of the civilizing and elevating influence it has exerted and will continue to exert upon all who drink at her holy fountain. These men therefore appear like incendiaries who, from fruitless malice, apply the torch to works of art, for no other reason than to destroy. But it more than surprises me, to hear that Israelites can go time after time, and encourage such men to persevere in their blasphemy, by lending them the countenance of their presence, and by contributing to their support. What good can be derived from such a course? If we admit once that the Bible is not true, there can be no occasion for our hearing the same idea repeated in a new form from time to time. If we are once persuaded that there is no necessity for belief, there is an end of moral obligation, and an end too of the necessity of any man to tell us so; and therefore there can be no earthly imaginable reason, why we need go more than once to attend infidel lectures, if we admit their truth. The only result such an attendance can produce is a laxity of religious observance, or, if this has already established itself as the course of life of the moral patient, it locks the door against his recovery, and fairly shuts against him the hopeful portals of repentance. No, beloved friends! that man who attempts in the least to weaken your attachment to the inherited religion you possess, who in the least dares to throw discredit upon the sacred records of revelation, who casts in his presumption a slur upon the wisdom which he does not comprehend, who is base enough to design depriving you of your comfort whilst living, and your hope when dying,—that man, I say it boldly and truly, is your greatest foe, he is your mortal enemy, despite that he terms you his enlightened hearers, his free-thinking untrammelled brothers; he deceives you—he is in darkness himself, and would fain extinguish in his wickedness the light of hope which God's law kindles within you. He flatters your vanity, only effectually to destroy your everlasting trust in the goodness and mercy of God. Shun him as you would the dalliance of the beautifully painted, poisonous reptile, whose every fang is surcharged with the venom of death. Yes, if the unthinking or they who have thrown the Lord behind their backs, to use the emphatic word of Scripture, would invite you to cross the threshold of his halls, avoid them as you would the portals of the lazar house where a horrible death would await you; nay, far safer would it be to expose your bodies to a premature earthly dissolution, than to risk by such intercourse the everlasting happiness of your immortal spirits.

We have been led step by step to dwell so long upon the few points already exhibited, that we must condense what yet remains of our proposed subject for to-day's contemplation. We spoke of our day of rest as contradistinguished from the season of repose chosen by the gentiles. In this point we are unfortunately greatly remiss. Every excuse is greedily seized upon which can by any possible construction extenuate our disregard of the day of the Lord's own instituting. This blessed day was to be a sign between Him and his chosen people; for on it they should repose from bodily labour, and consecrate it to Him alone. It was to be a perpetual sign, that is to say, that in every period of time, from Moses to the latest generation, it should be always regarded and respected as the special evidence of the Lord's superintending care over all creation. It is not to be denied that the gentiles, when partially embracing our faith, changed, without any reasonable cause whatever, the seventh into the first day as devoted to rest and worship. But we have not received any dispensation to authorize us to follow in this course; the Scriptures sanctify the seventh day and no other; and if the observance of *our* Sabbath is no longer requisite, then is there no instituted Sabbath whatever. But again I say, it is morally certain that an unbelief in the religious obligation to keep the seventh day holy is not the cause of its frequent violation among us; we believe, on the contrary, in the full force of its enactment; but an unholy desire for wealth or distinction counsels too strongly a transgression of the divine behest, and we sin because we believe sinning to be advantageous in promoting some tangible worldly advantage. Yet it must be evident, that such a proceeding is not worthy of men who have been so eminently favoured with religious knowledge as we have been! Chosen to be the champions of the wisdom proceeding from the highest Source, it is indeed too humiliating that we are so much the slaves of worldliness! Not this is the way of life, not thus can we expect the glory of the Lord to dwell among us. But if we seek earnestly to abide in the shadow of the Most High, we must lay aside all desires which stand in the way of a union with Him, cast off the trammels which would necessarily clog our upward flight; and thus only can we be eternally happy, when, prizing God's favour above all things, we can forego the tangible gains of earthly pursuits, and dedicate even in our dispersion and captivity to his service the day which was set apart as the national acknowledgment of his universal sovereignty.

Nor are we at liberty to abolish the use of Israel's speech in our prayers. An unacquaintance with it is nothing but a disgrace to us and an evidence of an unpardonable supineness on our part; since, disguise it as we may, there are many opportunities for acquiring at least a moderate acquaintance with its structure. It was shown on a former occasion how a common language binds together the people using it, so much so as almost to constitute several nations one, although they have different governments.* Now the bond which unites the many congregations of our people is our common language; destroy this, and you destroy by far more than you imagine our nationality. The same book, no matter where printed or written, provided the language and characters are Hebrew, will be understood in every land where Israelites dwell; the very words are interwoven with our daily speech in some shape or the other, and the tones of this language are familiar to the Jewish ear as dimly remembered notes of music upon the enraptured fancy. And for what should these sweet recollections be changed? for the multifarious dialects of many nations, which would require for each land a properly authorized version of Scripture? Shall we thus bind ourselves to the decisions of fallible men? are we to rely helplessly upon the interpretations which might be forced upon us by persons, who might unfortunately be willing to take advantage of our ignorance? But whilst our prayers are offered up in the original Hebrew, whilst the Holy Law is rehearsed in the very words it was first given, we need never fear such a result; for if an error even should have been made in the rendering of any word or sentence, and say even that it has become current among Hebrews, succeeding generations may with the original before them correct the misapprehension of their predecessors; and thus the religion of Israel will ever spring forth renewed and in refreshed vigour from the fruitful soil of Israel's language.

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* For instance, England and the United States.

In short, we are bound to cultivate earnestly whatever may tend to elevate our character and mark the boundary line between us and the gentiles with more distinctness, though this must always be, as said already, without infringing in the least upon the rules of liberality and an active neighbourly love towards all our fellow-men of whatever creed and country. Only by such a course can we deserve the blessing of God's immediate protection, and be worthy of being the recipients of his glory. For this is nothing else, than that the workings of our blessed religion shall be seen in our lives and the happiness which thereby we diffuse around us, and by so acting the name of God, whom we adore and whose inheritance we are, will be glorified and his kingdom be in the end acknowledged by all the sons of man, who will see its happy effects on a people whom they once persecuted and despised. But this can only be, if we in very deed are Israelites in name and conduct; there must be no amalgamation with others; for to the descendants of Jacob alone, and only where we appear as such, which consequently demands at our hands a constant preservation of our race, our lineage, and our law, was the promise made which we read in our to-day's portion:

ושכנתי בתוך בני ישראל והייתי להם לאלהים :
וידעו כי אני ה׳ אלהיהם אשר הוצאתי אתם מארץ
מצרים לשכני בתוכם אני ה׳ אלהיהם :
שמות כט׳ מה׳ מו׳ :

" And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and I will be a God unto them. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who have brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell in the midst of them, I am the Lord their God." Exodus, xxix. 45, 46.

So great a blessing as is here held out to our acceptance cannot be deemed one of small moment, nor should it be idly thrown aside from motives of unbelief or faithlessness. We ought to consider that our redemption was not for our glorification, our selection was not that we might boast of the great favour which we had received: only that we might be the recipients of the law which was founded upon the wisdom of God, in order that He might in very truth dwell in the hearts of his creatures and be reverenced and acknowledged the King of all. The way this can be done has been pointed out to you in Scripture; but this can only be accomplished, if you are willing to be and to remain children of Jacob whom the Lord called Israel and Jeshurun, and are obedient in thought, in faith, in hope, in deed to that holy law which was surrendered to you by that mediator and messenger between God and man, Moses, than whom no greater prophet ever arose in Israel, and like whom none ever will exist from the beginning of the world till all shall have ceased to be.

And now, O our God! fill our hearts with reverence of thy great and fearful name; teach us truly how to worship Thee, and remove the heart of stone from us, that we may all return unto Thee with a sincere and humble repentance, in order that thy glory may be evident among us, and that it may be known by all that we are thy people, and that thy word in our hands is true and abiding for ever. Amen.

Adar 8th. } 5602.
Feb'y 18th. }

DISCOURSE IX.

JUDAH'S OFFERING.

Unto the everlasting Father and eternal King, the sole Creator, the only Ruler, the omnipotent Saviour, be glory, praise, and adoration from now unto everlasting. Amen.

Brethren!

As one of the blessings promised to the Israelites at their restoration the last of the prophets predicts:

וערבה לה' מנחת יהודה וירושלים כימי עולם
וכשנים קדמניות : מלאכי ג' ח' :

"Then shall be pleasant unto the Lord the offering of Judah and Jerusalem, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Malachi, iii. 4.

In proceeding to investigate the meaning of this prediction as well as that of every other prophecy contained in Scripture, we must bear in mind, Who were the prophets? and, To whom did they speak in the execution of the missions with which they were charged? First, as to who were the prophets? we answer, they were men of Israel, descendants from the patriarchal stock, chosen from among the multitude of their fellow-citizens on account of the superior adaptation which an all-seeing God discovered in them for matters of high emprise and noble daring in the cause of the blessed faith given from Horeb. Secondly, as to whom did they speak in the execution of the missions with which they were charged?

To this we reply, that they were sent to those who were of their own kindred, the whole house of Israel, to warn them and to exhort them to obedience to that law which they had all alike received as their heavenly heir-loom, and which they were all alike bound to follow, be they priests or people, prophets or children. In other words, the prophets were ardent, strict, unflinching adherents of the Law of Moses, and they were sent to exhort their fellow-believers to follow in the same path, in the road of salvation. It is therefore evident that, if we wish to have a correct view of prophets and prophecies, we must on no account lose sight of the two important facts which we have mentioned, that the prophets were Israelites in every sense of the word, and spoke preëminently of matters which concerned the political and religious welfare of Israelites, of those to whom they had been sent.

From this reasonable view it follows likewise that, if prophets speak of the Israelites or of the law of the Israelites, and exhort the first to obedience and set before them the latter as the thing to be obeyed, they must be understood to speak in a direct, literal and obvious sense of the words, and not be taken as speaking figuratively or metaphorically; that is to say, they mean nothing else than what the first and common sense meaning of their words signifies. If now Malachi speaks of the offering of Judah and Jerusalem as the thing which shall be again agreeable unto the Lord, it is not consonant with reason to look for occurrences taking place four hundred or more years after the prophet's death to interpret for us his words, but to events and institutions with which he himself and his hearers likewise were familiar. Nor will it be correct to suppose that Judah means some other people than the inhabitants of Palestine, and Jerusalem some other city than the capital of that land; for if the prophet had wanted to convey this view, he would have so expressed it. He surely cannot be supposed to be in want of words to express his ideas so as to be intelligible; and if he did not wish to convey the actual Judah and the identical Jerusalem, he certainly chose a very ambiguous mode of expressing his thoughts. For if Judah be not Judah, and Jerusalem some other real or imaginary city, we require some authority other than the holy Text to inform us what we are to understand by the words employed; and consequently, Scriptures would cease to be able to direct and inform us as to what are the doctrines we are to believe in, and what duties we are to practise. But it is evident that we must necessarily rely upon the Bible alone for all matters of belief and duty; and therefore no matter what may be the secondary, hidden or included meaning of the words (which spirituality we are on no account willing to deny): the evident signification of the phrases must be the first and chief object of the revelation which we have received. So then when we are told of an offering, an absolute offering, or sacrifice in its various modification is meant; and when it is qualified by the addition of Judah and Jerusalem, we are at once certain that the sacrifice spoken of is precisely such a one, as was offered by the people of Judah at the city of Jerusalem, and no other. Admit now, for argument's sake, that the offering designated should not be the outward sacrifice of animals with their accompanying meat and drink-offerings: what then should be understood? The prophet himself gives us no clue whatever, the Bible is completely silent of the spiritual sacrifice; and consequently we are left to mere conjecture to designate with any probability the intended or promised sacrifice. Indeed they, who arrogate the blessed promise as referring to themselves, actually do endeavour to make their system tally with the prediction, and even different sects try to prove that they have something like a sacrifice among the ceremonies of their religion, which they vainly assert is the pure offering indicated by the prophet from whom our text is taken. Without going to-day far into the subject, I will merely state the case simply, that each of you, brethren, may be able to decide the question for himself. In the first place, there seems to an Israelite something very harsh and irreconcilable with divine wisdom to call any sacrifice which the Lord has instituted less pure than any other, which He has ordained or which He may ordain hereafter, or which any man may invent. As believers in the truth of revealed religion we have no right, and cannot therefore be authorized, to call a symbolic sacrifice more pure than an actual one; or the presentation of bread and wine, or any other typical gift of whatever nature it may be, more holy than the actual presentation of blood and fat on the altar. We are nowhere authorized to condemn any portion of the Bible as unreasonable, superfluous, or abrogated; and consequently we are not warranted, either by reason or revelation, to stigmatize the sacrifices described in Leviticus as otherwise than holy and pure, or else they never could have occupied a conspicuous place in the word of God, or been permitted to constitute a constant, daily, and integral part of his temple-worship. In short, we maintain that we need no other, and that there is nothing purer and holier than the divine ordination of the sacrifices; and these consisted, as we all know, of different kinds of animals, with different species of bread, oil, and wine, and were divided, according to their nature, into burnt, peace, sin, and trespass-offerings; and according to the character of the offerers into private and public sacrifices. The introductory chapters of Leviticus give ample directions regarding this subject, and you are referred to this authority for the different laws respecting it. Upon inspection, it will be seen that all the sacrifices, without exception, were intended as aids to devotion, and as acknowledgments by the sinner of his guiltiness and unworthiness in the sight of his Maker.

We all know from experience and history that mankind are disposed to sin, both individually and collectively; and consequently the sacrifices were of a similar nature. They were in the first instance the gifts of individuals, springing at times from a voluntary elevation of feeling to acknowledge some signal deliverance, some undeserved enjoyment of mercy (as all the bounties of the Lord are undeserved by man), at others from a conviction that guilt attached to their soul. In the first case, the Israelite came to the house of his God perhaps from a distant corner of his lovely fatherland, when he had escaped from the perilous storm which threatened destruction to his frail bark, frail when contending against the power of the Most High; or when rising from the couch of sickness, where human aid was also of no avail, and where the great Physician alone could send healing; or when returning from the sands of the mighty desert in safety, delivered from the sword of the marauding plunderer and the fatal simoom; or upon again seeing his loved homestead, snatched by his almighty Deliverer from the dungeon of the foe, the dangers of the battle-field and the assault of contending armies; or because he saw himself blessed in his undertakings, his fields yielding a rich produce, his flocks multiplied, and his herds bringing a numerous increase.—In all these instances and many similar ones, the pious Israelite came with the fatling of his flock, or the best steer of his herds, or the first fruits of his field, to enjoy a day of festivity at the courts of his God in the midst of sympathizing friends and rejoicing kindred; and others doing and feeling like himself were there likewise; and the common bond of love to God bound them then into the common chain of Israel's sons and daughters, teaching them all to look to Him only for grace, mercy, and protection; inasmuch as all had come to acknowledge themselves his subjects and debtors for undeserved mercies, bountifully bestowed.

Or if a man had sinned against God or man, if his soul felt overburdened with the weight and consciousness of his guiltiness, what could better fix upon his mind the nature and odiousness of sin, than his repairing to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem with his sacrifice as an atonement? not that the slaughtered beast had any power in it to wash away sin and to restore peace to the soul, but that the entire process was the work of faith and obedience; for from the moment that the sinner thought of bringing an offering, till the consummation of the sacrifice, was one series of acts of penitence and devotion. First, he must have been awakened to a consciousness of sin, before he could resolve to bring a sin or trespass-offering. Then he must have felt the contaminating influence of sin, or else he would not strive to escape from its power. Then he had to make restitution for whatever injury he had done to his neighbour, or even the defenceless stranger, who had no friend to take his part and no protector, save the Lord above who announces himself as the Friend of the stranger. Next there was required an humble outpouring of the spirit in confession of the wrong done and of the guiltiness thereby incurred; and when at last the sacrifice itself was standing near the altar, the sinner's hands were laid on the head of the victim, and he was solemnly impressed, not alone by the knowledge of his iniquity, but the overpowering consciousness that he was, so to say, standing in the immediate presence of the great King, the Searcher of hearts, who could not be deceived with regard to the sincerity of his repentance. It must hence be self-evident that, if a thorough conviction of sin can at all be produced in the mind of man, it must be through means like these and at a place like the temple in Jerusalem, especially since the very nature of publicly sacrificing a sin or trespass-offering was a public acknowledgment that the sacrificer had transgressed; and now he came before the face of all the people to bow in humility and meekness, nothing daunted by the shame of exposure, only because he had sinned, to seek for mercy and forgiveness and a renewal of favour from the Lord whose law he had transgressed. It was not therefore the sacrifice itself which made atonement, but the contrition of heart, the sincerity of hope, the wrong amended, the restitution of the iniquitous gain, the exuberance of prayerful feeling, the renewed faith and trust which characterized the accepted offering. —These features were, in brief, the leading points of the individual sacrifices; but the public ones, the daily no less than the extraordinary, were to do likewise for the people what the former did for the single person. Daily the people, by their representatives, consisting of priests, Levites, and Israelites, stood near the Lord's altar at Jerusalem, to acknowledge that the nation, like its component single members, had received bounties from God, and that collective sins too had been committed, for which at stated periods general atoning offerings were required. And when particular great sins had been committed by the congregation, and on the great Day of Atonement, once in every year, sacrifices were required, which, by the peculiar solemnities attending them, were the more strongly calculated to arrest the attention, and to move more emphatically the whole assembled body present at such an occasion to a more immediate and thorough repentance. And when the three seasons of pilgrimage to the sanctuary came round to bless and sanctify the house of Israel, then again were the offerings demanded, in order that over the board, literally spread from the immediate store of the Lord, his holy name might be blessed, and his fear might again animate the ardent belief in his salvation, and that they who had no means of their own might sit down with their wealthier brethren to commemorate, annually, their redemption from Egypt, the proclamation of their life-bringing law, and the watchful Providence that had cared for, and protected them during their weary and protracted wandering for a period of forty years in the inhospitable deserts of Arabia. And again upon the recurrence of the Passover, the peculiar offering of a roasted lamb with its attendant ceremonies, was to bring back a lively recollection, or more correctly speaking, a personification of their redemption from cruel bondage, and to remind them that for the sake of making them a priestly nation was the arm of the Most High bared to break asunder the bands of their yoke, that they might walk forth freed and redeemed.

In short, individual gratitude and sin, national thanksgiving and transgression, were all to be expressed by offering or sacrifice. To discover anything impure or unworthy in such an institution surpasses the comprehension of an Israelite. For no one can say, with any show of truth, that faith excited to contrition, sinfulness acknowledged publicly, the feeling of thanksgiving exhibited unequivocally before assembled thousands, devotion participated in simultaneously by all classes of the people, are otherwise than acts upon which the Lord must look with approval, seeing that thereby his kingdom will truly be extended over the hearts of individuals, and be firmly established among a people where they who act thus are so numerous, as they were during the prevalence of piety among our forefathers. Whatever, also, has an effect upon the spread of righteousness, whatever elevates the heart and rouses the dormant faculties to contemplation and reverence, is evidently not unworthy of divine favour; consequently the sacrifices, even as they were brought by the actual people of Judah, and in the identical city of Jerusalem in days of old and in former years, are things which are well worthy to be restored at the time of the redemption.—I do not deem it requisite to defend the institution of bloody victims against the asserters of a new revelation; for if they at all rely upon the predictions of the prophets, they must also admit the truth of the law and the wisdom of that divine institution, in confirmation of which all the prophets spoke. It is strange indeed to hear them cavil at some portions of Scripture, and to see with how much skill and industry they select such passages as suit their convenience, and weave them into an apparently strong fabric, which they offer to the world at large as impregnable to the assaults of argument. But if the Bible is true, which all believers will gladly join in asserting, it is an absolute requisite that the whole of its contents be true; and if one part of the law is obligatory, every one of its enactments must be likewise binding and authoritative. Now it is evident that the sacrifices, as they were in practice among us, were of divine origin, being ordained and described in the law; consequently they are in their very nature the effects of a Source, pure and holy. Now, say even that, at a subsequent period, another institution of a different kind was established by an equally high authority, which we, however, totally deny, that does not prove that the original scheme of sacrificial atonements was otherwise than wise, pure, and holy. Nay, the very claim of a substitute, either as having been made absolutely by one individual in a period long antecedent to this age, which is maintained by some, or as being to this day brought daily in a symbolical and typical manner, as asserted by others of the followers of the creed alluded to, proves that all agree in maintaining the necessity and usefulness of sacrifices; since they only differ in respect to the manner and nature of the materials which are to be employed toward this purpose. In fact, they go in their zeal so far as to say that, without a sacrifice, there can be no atonement; but this proves too much or too little; for if sacrificial atonement be absolutely required, then there is a necessity likewise for bloody victims, if an offering of some sort is to be brought, for the law mentions no other; and if these can be dispensed with, then have we every right to contend that, under certain circumstances, there can be atonement without sacrifices; for we assert that they were, at best, but aids to devotion and repentance; and when, by any reason whatever, their attainment is out of our power, the Merciful will accept devotion and repentance, provided they be sincere, even if unaccompanied by the gifts originally stipulated for in the law.

This view brings us now to the elucidation of our text: "Then shall be pleasant unto the Lord the offering of Judah and Jerusalem, as in the days of old and as in former years." Let us at first determine the period meant by the prophet. In the first two chapters he reproves the evil-doers for their contempt of divine authority and their defiance of God's judgment. But we all know that this is the present state of the world no less than in the days of our republic; wickedness sits enthroned in high places, and triumphantly defies the God of justice, ridiculing the weakness of less hardy spirits, who affect to tremble before the invisible Judge and his unknown decrees. But suddenly the prophet bursts forth with an impassioned and high-wrought picture of better things, that are to follow at a time remote from his own, and under a state of society differing materially from the one prevailing when he spoke. These are his words: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall clear out the way before me; and suddenly shall come to his temple, the Lord whom ye are seeking, and the angel of the covenant whom ye desire, behold! he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who can stand when he appeareth? for he is like the refiner's fire and like the soap of the fuller. And he will sit as the refiner and purifier of silver, and shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them like gold and silver; that they shall belong unto the Lord, who sacrifice the offering in righteousness." And then he adds: "Then shall be pleasant unto the Lord the offering of Judah and Jerusalem." It must be self-evident that the prophet looks forward to a state of mental purity. It cannot be that he spoke of the second temple; for he lived, according to the best authorities, near a hundred years after its erection. It cannot be that he spoke of a state of society like that in which he lived; for he specifically says that the Refiner will purify the house of Levi as gold and silver; which, as far as our knowledge extends, has not yet taken place. Nor can it be asserted that he speaks of a metaphorical cleansing; for he couples this promise with one of a real, substantial, well-understood act, the bringing of sacrifices. Nor can it be that the sacrifice itself is to be symbolical; for he mentions the offering of Judah and Jerusalem as in days of old. Now what were the days of old? Evidently the days of Moses, of David, of Hezekiah, of Josiah, and other pious leaders, when, indeed, the offering of the people was savoury in the eyes of the Lord. But if a symbolical sacrifice had been intended, he would have said: "Then shall be brought unto the Lord a new offering, which shall be forever pleasing, by far more than the ancient sacrifice of steers and lambs upon the altar of the house of Judah, erected unto the Most High, which is now in Jerusalem." It is really inconceivable that these words could not have been employed, if this were to have been the idea intended. Yet no such promise is made; on the contrary, "the offering of Judah at Jerusalem" is given as the object of promise; and consequently we have by this simple construction a clear and undoubted exposition of the whole context. The time, therefore, for which the promise was given, is one subsequent to his own days; but not alone this, subsequent to our days also; for as yet the offering of Judah is not brought unto the Lord by purified priests at Jerusalem. So far is this from being the case, that our priests and Levites are hardly distinguishable from the rest of the people; and there is no altar now, nor has one been for many centuries, sacred unto the God of Judah at Jerusalem. On the contrary, in place of offerings being there accepted, millions of the people themselves have been slain in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem; in place of a joyful coming of the Lord to his sanctuary, the very temple which stood during the prophecy of Malachi was levelled to the ground and utterly destroyed by the people of the coming prince, as foreseen by Daniel. It cannot, therefore, be that the time specified has already arrived, or else the most essential part of the prophecy, that is, the accomplishment of the blessing which the prophet announced to his hearers, would have remained unfulfilled, whilst all the terrors of the purification had been amply dispensed. We, however, assert that the text alludes to a time, when a mighty change shall come over the arrangements of society; when the reign of injustice and oppression shall be at an end; when the God of justice will indeed come with the necessary preparation of the angel of the covenant; even Elijah, the Tishbite, who, with the messenger of salvation, David, the anointed redeemer, shall restore to their own long-lost homes the people who have for so many centuries borne the weight of their transgression; and then, and then only, will the time of purification be; and then, too, will the wicked be plucked out from the inheritance of the Lord, and the righteous alone shall be left to officiate in the awful Presence, which will then be residing in manifest glory before the eyes of all flesh.

Having thus fixed the time, we will briefly elucidate the nature of the blessing. We must remember, that sacrificing without repentance is an act of heinous hypocrisy which offends the Lord more than not sacrificing. For so says Isaiah: "To what purpose is unto me the multitude of your sacrifices? saith the Lord; I am sated with burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fat beasts; and the blood of steers, or of sheep and goats, I desire not." (i. 11.) Lest, however, this passage be taken as a repudiation of all sacrifices, we will adduce a parallel illustration from Leviticus: "And if for all this you will not hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me, then will I lay waste your cities, and desolate your sanctuaries, and I will not smell your agreeable savours." (xxvi. 27, 31.) This clearly indicates that it is sin alone which takes away the acceptability of the sacrifice, but that righteousness will make it a sweet and agreeable savour. Another construction must be inadmissible, since no reasonable being could suppose that Moses meant to cast discredit upon the institution which he himself was ordered to promulgate. It was therefore the multitude of transgressions which caused the sacrifices to cease for a time, not that thereby an atonement is denied to us, but that the great aids to devotion would not be acceptable, whilst the general state of sinfulness continued to defile the house of Israel. But to the individuals composing this people atonement is not denied, forgiveness is not withheld whilst they voluntarily seek the pardon of their God by sincerity, humility, and repentance. Not to weary you with quotations, we will merely cite a single proof from the third chapter of Hosea, 4, 5: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without sacrifice, and without an image, and without ephod and teraphim. After that shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and they shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." It requires no extensive learning to interpret these words. They picture just such a state as our own is at this day; we have neither king nor prince, neither sacrifice to the Lord, nor on the other hand are we given to idolatry; and whilst no priest with the ephod officiates for us, we are steadfastly refusing to adopt the teraphim or idolatry of every and any nation under the sun. Nevertheless, says the prophet, there are hope and salvation; for after these many days of evil are passed away, the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord and David their king. Are they to be *cast off* for their rebellion? or are they to be rebels? By no means; they are to seek the Lord in sincerity, and consequently they will fear Him and be accepted by Him, according to his glorious promises, at the very time when they are to desire and acquiesce in the mission of the person whom their God will send as his messenger. If, now, there were no atonement without sacrifice, then would it be impossible that this state of acceptance could ever take place; but since it is promised as impending, we must come to the conclusion, that the change of heart and conduct which alone made the offered victim an agreeable savour, will yet, in our dispersed state, obtain for the individual Israelite the forgiveness and salvation of his Creator. But when the state of rebellion and sin which now characterizes us has passed away, when the Lord has again been found by us, when the King David truly reigns on earth: the obstacles to national acceptability will have been removed, and they, who are left of all Israel after the millions of sinners shall have been removed and cast out from the household of God, will again unite as one man in front of the altar of the Most High at Jerusalem, and bring there their offering in truth, and humility, and righteousness, and call again with one accord upon their Rock and Redeemer, whose glory will then fill the earth, and whose kingdom will then subdue every heart and consecrate every spirit. In this manner only, and by no symbolical atonement or other fanciful substitute, either of times past or the present day, can the prophecy be fulfilled to which we have clung with so much of hopefulness and well-founded confidence. Indeed, the Word of God has never deceived us; and therefore we trust in his coming, and that, though fearful the trial for each of us, He will purify the remnant of his chosen flock from all who are unworthy of dwelling in his fold; and then will assuredly the temple be rebuilt upon the spot of Isaac's intended sacrifice, on the blessed hill in the land of Moriah; and there at the foot of the altar will all Israel fall prostrate, whilst thence will ascend again the smoke of the sacrifice as in the days of old and in former years of acceptance and national happiness.

O, may our eyes behold it and our heart be glad, and our soul rejoice in thy salvation, O Lord! when in truth it is said to Zion "thy God reigneth;" for thine is the kingdom and unto everlasting wilt Thou reign in glory, for we have no king save Thee, who are the undying Ruler and Creator of all flesh, and whose providence is from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

Nissan 7th. } 5602.
March 18th. }

DISCOURSE X.

PARENTAL EXAMPLE.

(A SUNDAY-SCHOOL ADDRESS.)

Lord of lords and King of kings! we thy children humbly approach thy throne, relying on thy mercy which is unending, to grant us the aid we need in our endeavour to glorify thy name. We well know that without thy aid all our labour is in vain, that, unless Thou blessest, our toiling must remain fruitless. But we know Thee, O our God! that Thou art ever ready to hear the prayer of thy servants, that the humble words of the children of clay do not ascend unobserved before thy mercy-seat. Do, then, hear us this day, and bless with the light of thy countenance the teachers who have endeavoured to spread a knowledge of thy law, so that they may not be led into error, and be guarded against deceitful words through which thy holy name might be profaned; increase their understanding of thy wisdom and thy statutes, that they may be enabled to explain correctly thy precepts to those who need their instruction and advice. To the scholars, however, do Thou, O our Father! grant a wise heart, that they may readily comprehend whatever is imparted to them of thy law, so that they also may become able to transmit to others the fruit of the tree of life which refreshes their spirit. Cause them to be a joy to their parents in the vigour of life, and a prop to them in their old age, when their steps are feeble and their eye is dimmed, and they are hovering at the brink of the tomb, ready to be called into thy presence.

But we especially would beseech Thee, our Father and King! to have regard to our fallen condition, and to look down with compassion upon the sinners of thy people Israel. Fill Thou their hearts with an appreciation of thy goodness and with a knowledge of the sinfulness of their ways; so that they may feel the weight of their transgression, and return unto Thee with a repentance of truth and sincerity, which will restore them again to thy unending favour. And, if their obduracy will not recognize thy ways and greatness, if their sinning nature refuses to hear thy voice which speaks from all nature, from the beaming sun, and the lucent star, and which resounds to thy children from the book Thou hast written for their guidance: then let thy chastening hand be laid upon them, that they in their sorrow may learn to know the mercy which in their prosperity they did not heed, and to attend to the voice of thunder, when they heard not the soft whispering of harmony which pervades all thy works. Do Thou thus purify all thy household, so that not one may be cast off, when Thou comest in majesty to judge all creatures. And be farther pleased to open the eyes of all Israel to the evil that they have done, to feel the sinfulness of causeless hatred and contention under which thy household has so long suffered. Teach us all to regard each other as brothers, as children of one Father, all alike objects of thy care, no matter what country gave them birth, what their station be in life, provided they be wise in knowing Thee and rich in deeds of righteousness which are pleasing in thy sight.

But what can we say? what can we desire? since Thou knowest our wants, since everything is within thy power to do? O hear us, then, when we call! answer us whilst we are yet speaking; and grant us thy blessing even as seemeth best in thy wisdom; only forsake us not in our affliction, only cast us not off utterly in our dispersion. But have mercy upon us, and upon all Israel thy people, and upon Zion thy city, and thy temple and sanctuary which the heathen have trodden down in their presumption, and which are waste and desolate, as we see this day. Display again, we pray Thee, thy power and glory before all flesh, that the nations may not say that we are suffering because we do love thy law. But prove to us and to all the world that it is for our transgression against thy will, and because that we sought other means of happiness than thy law, that we are suffering thy just wrath and indignation. O hasten, then, the time of redemption, when Thou wilt have mercy upon the city of Zion which is now desolate, and upon thy people which are now scattered over all thy earth; and send us the redeemer who is to comfort us, and who shall by thy power rule over every son of Jacob, in whose days Judah shall be saved and Israel dwell securely, and to whom all nations shall flock to be taught of thy ways, even David thy servant for whose coming we hope, and whom thy prophets foretold to reign in thy name. Amen.

Friends and Brethren:

We have this day assembled to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the institution of a school for the diffusion of religious knowledge among the Jewish inhabitants of this city. The exercises which we have witnessed bear ample testimony, that much has been done to advance the cause in which we are all alike interested, whether we are parents or not, since no Israelite, be he who he may, can do otherwise than participate with heartfelt joy in whatever tends to promote a knowledge of the faith of which he is a professed member, and which is so well calculated, as is this school, to prevent the spread of erroneous opinions on matters concerning our everlasting happiness amidst the descendants of Israel. If this is the case with those who have no ties of consanguinity with these young disciples before us, how much greater must be the joyful emotion of those who behold here some young relative proving by his to-day's replies that he indeed knows how to appreciate his birthright, and ancestral privilege of being numbered among the sons of Abraham, the friend of the Lord. And how much greater yet must be the happy feeling of those who claim in this youthful assembly a son or a daughter, if they be parents who indeed think it a happy lot that their God is the God of Jacob, that their faith is that perfect truth which has descended down to us from a long line of pious ancestors. For they must be convinced, and for this consciousness thank their Maker, that by the imbibing of religious knowledge their children will ever call on the Lord whom alone they themselves worship, and cling to that law which alone they have received as the everlasting truth spread abroad by the Creator of the universe.

But to feel pleasure in the proficiency of their children in religious knowledge is not enough to prove that parents have a proper appreciation of their duty;

for, since by the will of the Father of all flesh they have been appointed temporary guardians of one or more immortal spirits, something else may justly be expected of them than mere joy at the successful progress of their offspring; for they must take part in the blissful labour to promote this knowledge, they must themselves set them the example of righteousness in action, which they then may follow to their last day without doubt or uncertainty. What is the use of children being taught by their teachers to fear the Lord, if their parents do not enforce the precept thus given by their conversation at home, and the conduct which they exhibit in their domestic arrangements? For, if such be the example which the children witness, they are taught in vain during the hours they are under the teacher's eye, and no holiness can take root in the youthful mind. Yet it requires no great exertion of the reasoning faculties to prove that without religion there can be no happiness, and that moreover to the Israelite there can be no religion without his drinking from the fountain of living waters erst opened for us on Mount Horeb by a mightier Hand than was the prophet's, when he caused water to flow by his rod from the rock on yonder mount. There is no safety for Jacob's sons and Israel's daughters but beneath the wings of the cherubim, which cover the ark of the covenant; and there is no one can place them there with as much ease and effect as their own parents, whom both law and reason counsel them to love and to obey. No, the father's glory is not in having a wise son; it is not the mother's happiness that she have an intelligent daughter; unless the one is quick in serving the Lord, and the other intelligent in knowing her Maker's ways. But if this end be attained, then indeed may parents bless themselves that they are not childless, and that they may leave behind them those who will perpetuate their name and lineage amidst the people of the God of Jacob. To do this requires no great amount of information nor a high degree of intellect on the part of parents; it is not the most renowned for wisdom and learning who are the highest in the kingdom of Heaven, nor whose children are the truest servants of the Lord; but they, who are sincere in their love of God, and who uniformly set before their household the law and wisdom of the Lord, are the persons who will be highest among the elect, and whose seed will enjoy the highest blessing, that of being numbered among those who have a place and a name in the house of their Maker, a place which no earthly trials and mutations can snatch from them, and a name which no calumny can deprive them of, which will not perish in the lapse of centuries and amidst the subversion of empires.

The Bible gives us a beautiful example of parental piety in the mother of the prophet Samuel. She was the wife of a pious Levite, who omitted no season to repair to the house of God at Shiloh to make his offering. With him came his wife Hannah, to whom hitherto had been denied the blessing of being a mother. In common with others of our people she longed to have a being upon whom she might lavish a mother's care, and to see herself so to say continued in a child in whose existence she might claim a share. Her barrenness therefore was to her a source of the severest grief; and knowing that the Lord could grant her wish, she earnestly implored his aid in her distress, and before the altar of the Most High she besought with inward prayer that her sufferings might be regarded, and the shame of being childless be removed from her. And these were her words:

ה' צבאות אם ראה תראה בעני אמתך וזכרתני ולא
תשכח את אמתך ונתתה לאמתך זרע אנשים ונתתיו
לה' כל ימי חייו ומורה לא יעלה על ראשו :
שמואל א' א' יא' :

"O Lord of hosts! if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a male child: then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." 1 Sam. i. 11.

We perceive in this vow nothing of worldliness, no temporal gain which the pious woman expected by the son she prayed for, only that, should the Lord hear her prayer, she might have the happiness of seeing him destined to the service of his Maker, to be in fact a *Nazir*, or one devoted altogether to a life of religious observance. The child she had prayed for was born; and when the little Samuel was barely old enough to dispense with his mother's personal care, she brought him to the tabernacle of the Lord, to be there educated for his noble calling under the immediate superintendence of the high-priest Eli. It is not our purpose at present to follow the prophet through the various scenes of his eventful life; we are not able to add the least to the effective though brief history which the Bible furnishes us with; but it is proper that we apply the lesson so beautifully taught us to our own course of conduct. Picture to yourselves the Hebrew mother, her long-desired wish amply gratified, now on the point of quitting her house with her son for the tabernacle at Shiloh. The greater her love was, the greater must have been the sacrifice she was now bound to make in fulfilment of her vow; she must forego his innocent prattle, his joyous laughter; she must not cradle his head upon her bosom when sickness seizes him; she is not permitted to rejoice in the dawning of his intellect, in the expansion of his mind; only at distant and long intervals can she even be allowed to behold him, and to pour out the full gushing tide of maternal affection. Yet she grieves not, she rather rejoices that she can fulfil the self-imposed task; for she knows that her son is well provided for, since he may dwell near the altar of her God, and be there reared by faithful and trusty guides as an earnest follower of the great Being by whose especial favour he had been given in answer to his mother's prayer. We have now the key to Hannah's wish; it was not, as we said, for worldliness that she desired a son, only that among the faithful her image might be borne by one of their number, her name be treasured by one whom she had born and then devoted to God. She knew not, she could not have anticipated, that he would rise to that eminence of being the accepted prophet unto the Lord which afterwards he attained, and that her own simplicity of faith and her prayers would be chronicled in the record of her people to live for everlasting in the memory, and for the imitation of all; but the whole context clearly proves that the piety of her progeny was all she craved, justly thinking that if her child be pleasing to God, his whole happiness would be well secured, and thus the mother's ardent desire for his welfare, both in this life and the future, would amply be fulfilled. That this was so, we find fully related in the Bible, and more, too, than she had had the boldness to ask was also granted; inasmuch as by his sincere devotion and piety Samuel was selected by the Lord to be his messenger to the Israelites on many an occasion, and by these he was chosen as their judge in whom they all confided, whilst his bodily strength permitted him to hold the reins of government.

Now, let us investigate what gave Samuel the high standing among his people? Nothing but his unimpeachable integrity and incorruptible love of justice, qualities which marked him as a trusty servant of the Lord, and a worthy successor of the great prophet who was the instrument of God's mercy to his people. It was not great wealth, which probably he never had, nor the great talents with which he was endowed, that placed him in that prominent post; for we find that, as soon as his sons whom he had appointed to succeed him in his lifetime departed from the path of justice, his personal influence was not sufficient to maintain the delegated powers in unworthy hands. The means which raised him to his exalted dignity were wanting in his sons, and hence the people, who revered the father, refused to tolerate the dominion of those who followed not his good example. We have accordingly a twofold lesson taught us by the history of Samuel: the first, the duty which parents owe to their children and society to train them up in godliness; the second, that integrity is at length, despite of every other possession, the only quality which will carry us creditably through life, which integrity consists, however, in the exhibition of piety towards our Maker and sterling honesty in our intercourse with our fellow-men. Parents who truly love their children, and they who fear of offending their God, cannot close their eyes to the foibles and follies which they ought to be the first to detect. It is not well that strangers should be sharp-sighted to punish or to despise, when a little timely advice, and, if need be correction, might remove the fault whilst it is yet time. It is far better even in a prudential view that a friendly hand should punish, than that a censorious world should detect even the existence of a failing, though from interested motives it might be winked at. It is unbecoming to rational beings to be wilfully blind to traits of character which, if not early eradicated, must ultimately be the parents of vices that will render life miserable to the individual, and make him odious to his fellows. Were it that such indulgence could render faults unobserved, then the weakness of a parent might find some extenuation for not persevering in his endeavours to correct the faults of an obstinate child, which endeavours naturally produce at times unpleasant domestic scenes. But we are mistaken, if we believe that whatever faults our friends or ourselves have will not be readily discovered; mankind are not unmindful of the character of their neighbours; and any unamiable qualities will surely expose their possessor to contempt and hatred. Nothing therefore but a sturdy perseverance ought to be exercised towards any and every fault in children. If such correction and the necessary reproof produce even unpleasant contentions at times, it is evident enough, that they will become less frequent and constantly of a less intense degree, if those who ought to exercise authority are determined to be obeyed, and if both reason and religion tell them that the obedience they exact is strictly conformable to piety and moral integrity. There is nothing gained by vacillating, yielding at times and insisting at others; children detect this foible in their parents with remarkable quickness, and are not backward in availing themselves of all the tangible advantages which such a discovery affords them, in indulging their bad passions, and not rarely making their elders feel the power of annoyance and tyranny which they have by this means acquired. Be warned, parents! remember the example of Eli's sons whom God cast off for their crimes; and that because their father did not properly reprove them, he too shared in their punishment. Reflect that the great Samuel had to submit to the deepest mortification in his old age, because of the illegal proceedings of his own children. Endeavour, therefore, to counteract betimes any and every aberration from the path of right, and insist in every instance to meet with a cheerful obedience to your wishes and an acquiescence in the blessed religion which is yours. Do not imagine that your children will, when they grow up, learn by their own experience how to act; some indeed may perhaps do so; at least we are not disposed to dispute the possibility; but, believe me, that it is not very probable that they will submit to any new restriction when they grow up. If you wish them (and who being a parent would not?) to speak the truth upon all occasions, insist upon their doing so at the very outset of life; if you desire them to possess habits of frugality, temperance, and industry, teach them these principles from their earliest infancy; and lastly, if you have any fear of the Lord, if your bosom at all throbs with the idea of God, his goodness, his wisdom, his truth, and his law, if you mean it seriously with the hope that your sons and daughters should perpetuate the name of Israel which you yourselves bear: commence at once to instil the like principles from the cradle, and teach them day after day, and hour after hour, to know the Almighty God of Jacob, to feel that He is good beyond our most exalted thoughts, wise, and true, and just beyond measure, that his law is founded solely and surely upon his wisdom and truth, and that no man can possess a greater privilege than to be a member of Jacob's race, by which means he is shielded from error, from a belief in a god who does not exist, and a law which was not given by the Lord.

But to accomplish this pious system of domestic education, you must not rely upon your own wisdom to accomplish it; but, like Hannah, you should call upon the Giver of all grace for aid and counsel in this most important task of a parent's life. Sanctify yourselves by devotion and an entire surrender of your hopes and your wishes to the will of your Maker; be yourselves earnest in prayer, purify your own hearts by self-examination; and then go to work with a cheerfulness that is untiring, and an unflagging reliance upon divine aid which does not anticipate to fail in its holy task; and thus prepared, thus armed, with peace at home, with strong hopes placed above, your labour will be pleasant and your task more than half accomplished. At least, you will have done your share, and you will not have to accuse yourselves of having neglected to secure your children's best interests in this life and the life to come. What is it, if you leave them wealth—if you transmit to them an honoured name:—if you make not the first a blessing by pointing out by precept and example how it should be best employed, and show them how to add to the other by their own public and domestic conduct. So many thoughts crowd at this moment on my mind, that I would detain you too long were I to give utterance to all I feel; but enough, you understand me, and can readily fill up the meagre outline of the picture which I have presented. Only reflect, that the best legacy you can leave your offspring is your honoured name, honoured because of moral integrity towards men and a true devotion to God, and the possession of a training which will enable them in their turn to follow up your example, which will make their name likewise honoured when their race is run. Reflect that Hannah vowed her son to God; as we said, she desired a male child by whose worthiness her name might be blessed among mothers; and she hesitated not to fulfil her vow, to surrender her child of prayer as a servant at the temple of her God, when her prayer had been granted.—You, my friends, are not called upon thus to sever the domestic tie which binds you to your children: still your religion demands of you an analogous sanctification round the domestic fireside. We have now no tabernacle like that formerly at Shiloh, where your children could dwell in the immediate presence of God, under the guidance of holy priests and Levites; but you yourselves should watch over their early education, yes, watch unceasingly, to see that no unholy principles are inculcated in their minds, and that, with the knowledge of the truth which our blessed law gives unto us, they also are taught to practise upon every occasion with you every ceremony which our religion prescribes. And even before such time of action on their part arrives, do not omit the duties which are prescribed for early infancy; if yours be a male child, do not, if you love your souls and his lot in Israel, deny him the right of circumcision, which will make him perfect as Abraham was made perfect; and if he be the first fruit of conjugal love, then redeem him according to the words of law, and thereby acknowledge your gratitude to the God who has shed so manifold blessings upon Israel in redeeming them to be his people from amidst bondage and sorrow; and both sons and daughters train up from the moment their infant lips can breathe forth the name of God, from the very first dawn of awakening intellect, to know and to love their Maker, so that with every day of their advance into life their knowledge of his power and their love for Him, because of his goodness, may increase with their growth and strength as they become stronger. In this manner you may rejoice over their advancement in religious and scientific knowledge; for thus you have done the best in your power to make the first effective and the latter of real advantage to them and others; and thus, too, you may return sincere thanks to the Lord that He has not left you childless, inasmuch as you load not your soul with the guilt of corrupting by neglect or connivance an immortal spirit, destined like yourselves to everlasting happiness by the pursuit of virtue based on the religion received through Moses, which, let me repeat, is the only means by which we can attain the felicity of which the prophets speak as destined for the righteous who have faithfully obeyed the will of their Father in heaven.

Before I conclude I must say a few words to teachers and superintendents of children, applicable to these present no less than to all others who undertake these most important offices: Whether the care is bestowed voluntarily or for a price cannot affect the nature of the obligation; but whoever stands in relation of teacher is bound to employ every means which experience and skill afford him, to improve the minds and morals of his pupils. Negligence, slovenliness, irascibility and hastiness are alike unpardonable; and in many instances it would be far better that no education should be imparted, than that error should be permitted to corrupt the minds of the young by defective teaching. Teachers also, like parents, should set a wholesome example to their charges, and not think their task accomplished, if a lesson is well recited and a subject correctly understood. But above all is this required in an establishment like ours, where the avowed object is the imparting of religious knowledge to our young friends. No doubt the teachers all feel their duty to its full extent; let us then hope that they will honour the religion which they believe in by their conduct, and omit no opportunity to render it lovely in the eyes of their pupils, so that they, too, may be led by the silent and powerful incentive of imitation of those they justly love and revere to tread the same blissful path of truth and holiness, the commencement of which is amidst tears and sorrows on earth, but the ending of which is amidst joy and praise in the mansions of the blessed, in the presence of their God and Father, who lives for everlasting, and to whom be ascribed praise, glory, and holiness by all sons of man from now and forever. Amen.

Nissan 23d. } 5602.
April 3d. }

DISCOURSE XI.

THE REBELLION OF KORAH.

O Lord of all spirits! whose wisdom, power, and goodness are alike unending, we beseech Thee to be with us in all our undertakings, and in all our assemblies which are held for the glorification of thy fearful name. Make us sensible of our deficiencies; so that the counsels of pride and unbelief may not find an abiding-place within our hearts; in order that we may, solely depending for our light and instruction upon thy will as revealed in the word Thou hast written, always follow the precepts which were made known to our fathers, that it might be well with them and their children after them. Amen!

Brethren!

In all ages since the promulgation of our divine law it has shared the fate of all the blessings which the Almighty has conferred on man; it has been the object of attack and derision from the ignorant and designing; its very holiness has called forth the bitterness of bigotry, and the taunts of those who rely on their own wisdom; and yet it has ever proved itself invulnerable to the shafts of persecution, and it has bidden defiance to the array of argument which the unbeliever has been able to bring to bear against its truth. Yet so little does this enmity of opponents prove anything against the truth of our religion, that Moses, in the veracious history of our people, bears himself convincing testimony that he and his ordinances were alike the mark at which envy and malice shot many of their poisonous shafts. Did this fact convince him of the erroneousness of his system? Did he, because he was often opposed, cease to promulgate, during the remainder of his life, the doctrines of the *Torah?* On the contrary, the triumphant superiority vouchsafed to him on all occasions confirmed him hourly, if such confirmation had even been needed after his glorious and miraculous selection as the prophet of the Lord, that he was truly endowed with the spirit of wisdom and knowledge proceeding from on High, the like of which had never been conferred, nor ever will be conferred upon any mortal; and this assurance then urged him on to persevere, till the moment that death sealed his eloquent lips, in teaching on all occasions, before few and before a whole people, whatever of doctrine and duty he had obtained from the Lord in the character which had been bestowed on him, that of mediator between God and man. Indeed we may maintain, that the very opposition which was on several occasions manifested against the authority of Moses; the many instances of disobedience which are recorded on the part of the first recipients of the law, and the outbreaks of human passions with which the great teacher himself is chargeable—all tended to exhibit the more strongly the truthfulness of the revelation proclaimed from Sinai, which, almost unprepared as the people were for its reception, addressed itself to the mind of man, to govern his passions and to restrain his desires, in a manner hitherto unknown among mankind; since it was more strongly confirmed after every trial to which it was subjected, despite of the dangers that would have destroyed any other system, which, not being the immediate emanation of the Supreme Wisdom, could not have so established, as our religion has done, its empire over the heart of the universal mass of mankind. Yes, the heart of all mankind; for though there are to this day many who know not the Lord, and who have not yet heard of the mighty deeds He has done for the salvation of his people and all the sons of Adam; the time is approaching, be it by ever so slow steps and ever so gradual an advance, when the veil will be rent asunder, and the covering which now obscures the eyes of many nations will be removed, when they all shall see the glorious truth of which they now only perceive the faint dawning light, which but just begins to redden the distant horizon.

But it needs not my feeble voice to glorify the beauty of the heavenly bride that shone forth in her virgin loveliness before the eyes of admiring millions. Every son of Israel whose heart has not been led astray to worship at the shrine of a foreign god;

every daughter of our race who glories in her happy birthright in calling on the One God only in all her prayers and supplications, will simultaneously join in returning thanks for the undeserved mercy which God conferred on Israel to select them for his people, to guard the sacred treasure from the rude approach of the unclean and the stranger.

Nevertheless, it is evident that, while there are those who may in verity be styled unclean in spirit, and those who are strangers to the truths which are revealed in the law, so long will our religion meet with opponents more or less violent, as the case may be. You no doubt are aware, beloved brethren, that they who dwell in darkness always love to see others situated like themselves; and no sooner has any one embraced a course of life, be it ever so profligate or unreasonable, provided always he has only proceeded so far that he fears not to let his sentiments be known, than he will seek for associates in his pursuits. Daily experience proves this in the congregations of wicked persons combining for a certain end which they have in common; and, by this combining of different members, plans of iniquity are concocted, and not rarely executed, which one man would hardly have dared to encompass in his mind, or certainly would not have proceeded to venture on their execution, if he had even been bold enough to plan them. The rare exceptions to this general rule do not invalidate its truth, which is demonstrable from the whole history of man. But the same facts hold good with regard to opinions. No sooner does a man embrace a peculiar set of views, than he seeks to make converts to his side of the question; few men can bear to be in an inglorious minority, and they seek countenance to themselves by the overshadowing influence of a multitude agreeing with them in sentiment. It is owing, also, to this same consideration, that minorities are looked upon with suspicion; and any one who ventures to differ from the majority is sure to draw upon himself much of obloquy and, not rarely, hatred. Few, indeed, there are who will openly profess unpopular sentiments, although true in theory, or exhibit traits of conduct, however laudable, which will cause them to be remarked as persons of singular views and unfashionable deeds, again assuming that they are not urged on by the not unfrequent motives of attracting public attention by their singularities, or of making converts (a feeling very powerful and extremely urgent to many minds) to their own opinions. These general ideas which are experimental facts, proved by every one's experience, will explain to us the cause why Moses and his successors the prophets, and the people who follow their teaching, have always been exposed to the suspicion, hatred, and injustice of mankind in general. For Moses taught a new theory in politics and religion; he preached it openly, not so much with a view to make converts, as to enforce the conviction which the people had received from another Source. The end of it was that they, whose ideas of self-aggrandizement were annihilated by the new doctrines, and they who were compelled to acquiesce in the rule of their late associates, men of their own kindred, and equals in everything except their selection by human and divine choice to their exalted position, became dissatisfied with the new order of things, and omitted no opportunity of outraging the feelings of the best man who was ever raised to authority, and to sow discontent in the bosom of the newly organized community. The successors of Moses fared no better from those whom they were sent to reprove for many an act of daring disobedience. It had become fashionable to be irreligious; vice dwelt in high places of authority, and was unblushingly practised before the face of the noonday sun. What business then had some, who probably were unlettered men, to put to shame the learned and the great? Why should others of the lower order of the people dare to approach the noble clad in armour, or defy the king enrobed in purple? Add to this, that these same plain, roughly clad, bold-spoken preachers were even more marked in their conduct than in their exterior appearance, that they not only denounced vice, but exercised themselves the strictest virtue and devotion: and we have an abundance of reasons to account for the facts, that Elijah was a fugitive, Micajah a prisoner, Zechariah slain before the altar, and Jeremiah treated with every indignity, not to mention other names noted in Scripture who were equally ill-used by their countrymen.

And now let us descend from the prophets to the people who, though sinning, have still borne their testimony to the truth of prophecy: and we shall find that similar reasons have ever contributed their effect in rendering them odious—a strong word, nevertheless a true one—to the majority of men. This people, we the Jews, have firmly maintained a peculiar system, both of opinions and actions; the opinions go to reject all adjuncts to the Deity, of every kind whatever, and the actions are based upon a code, which many have never acknowledged in theory even, and which others, who have admitted its truth, declare abrogated as far as the obligations of positive religion are concerned. You can easily understand, brethren, how wide a line of demarcation these two points—I mean the difference in opinions and the diversity of the acknowledged rule of action—present between us and the gentile world; and consequently the abhorrence of the vast majority opposed to us is in nowise a matter of astonishment to one who has paid the least attention to the motives which govern human nature; since the constant presence of a numerically unimportant body of men, contradicting by word and action the views of their numerous neighbours, is daily exciting more or less acerbity of feeling which, if even it does not produce hatred or ill-will, is still a secret source of an unkindness of sentiment which, if it does not reach our bodies so as to injure us in a material manner, will yet prevent our religious ideas being received with that deference and respect so eminently due to their sanctity and truth. The majority does not love to be contradicted by the minority, much less can the multitude condescend to be instructed by the few. Now the fact is that our religion does contradict in every point of view, except the mere system of moral laws, the ideas of nearly the whole human race: of God we have conceptions which no other community shares; and our duties are prescribed in that holy book which the world at large will not receive as sole authority; for even our neighbours who believe in its inspiration, its holiness and truth, nevertheless assert that, so far as obligation is concerned, its precepts have long since been repealed.

We will not now stop to inquire whether the manner of this repeal be historically true or otherwise; enough, we maintain the permanency of all the biblical enactments, and as such we are in bold contradiction to those who maintain the contrary opinion. This being the case, it is perfectly consonant with human nature that the Jew should be the object of suspicion and misrepresentation, not because his ideas are wrong or untrue, or injurious to society at large, but only because those who differ from him are the many, whilst his fellow-believers are both the few in numbers, and the unimportant in the political scale of society.

These prefatory remarks will disclose to us the whole cause of the contentions to which Moses was exposed during nearly the whole time that he was at the head of the affairs of our infant commonwealth. You know that he was the first who proclaimed a consistent code of laws founded upon the great fundamental principle of the Unity of God, a doctrine which, as said on a late occasion, had been nearly overshadowed by the influence of the superstitious reverence of the Egyptians for a multiplicity of gods. Consequently, the people were bidden to separate themselves from all other then known nations, in ideas, in conduct, and in worship. It mattered not that the ideas were the sublimest that ever were presented to any descendant of Adam, that the rule of conduct was the essence of the highest wisdom, and the worship one which ennobled the worshipper and exalted him above the level of the ignorant and benighted followers of idols: it was enough that now they were ordered to be distinct from their former associates, and live apart in their domestic intercourse and intermarriages from those whom they were destined to conquer. The end was that a constant restlessness was displayed, and a hankering after prohibited worships, interdicted enjoyments and illegal affinities was manifested. In addition to this, every little adversity, every fancied, no less than real hardship caused them to regret that they had followed Moses into the wilderness, forgetting in their senseless ingratitude the benefits which he had been made the instrument of conferring on them. So soon is weak human nature prone to exalt itself when prosperity dawns upon us! So soon are we inclined to forget in moments of temporary trials the joys that were so long enjoyed! So soon do we endeavour to magnify temporary difficulties, and deem them insurmountable, that we may frame vain excuses for neglecting the duties which reason and religion demand of us! Hence it was that our forefathers deemed it a great hardship that so many particular restrictions had been laid upon them, which had not been enjoined upon the gentiles. They fancied, therefore, that the yoke of Heaven was too burdensome for their unwilling shoulders, and they constantly strove to imitate the course of Egypt which they had left, despite of their being warned that the practices of that land were odious in the sight of the Lord. Nay, when they had been falsely told that the land of Canaan, whither they were journeying, was too strongly fortified for them to conquer: they altogether lost every vestige of confidence in the guidance of God and his servant Moses, and wanted to appoint a leader to return to the land where galling servitude had been their afflictive portion. It was not that they had any doubt of what their own eyes had beheld of the truth of their miraculous redemption from slavery and the public proclamation of the Decalogue, nor that they had not been convinced that, in the contest with the Deity which, so to say, their oppressor Pharaoh had waged, he and his idols had been signally discomfited; but they could not so readily and without a violent struggle sever themselves from their ancient habits, and erect an insurmountable barrier between themselves and their former masters and associates. It was galling to them to be alone in their worship of One God, just as their descendants to this very day are often ashamed to acknowledge themselves Jews, or carefully conceal their practices under the law from the eye of the public, as though there were actually some disgrace in the fact of their worshipping and acting in accordance with the laws of Moses. No one of our present rebellious members doubts the main facts of revelation, or if perchance a few can be found who actually do so, they to a surety do not believe in the dogmas of those whose society they seek in preference to that of Israelites, and to whom they strive by every means to assimilate in speech and conduct. We all know that this was highly unwise in our ancestors, and this sinning was followed, as the record tells us, by punishment well merited by the apostates; but equally absurd and a thousand times more inexcusable is this procedure in the unfaithful of our time and country. The ancient Israelites had the excuse that the system they had received as their law was yet new, and inveterate habits were not so easily eradicated, except by miracle, though the law proceeded from God, and its appointed teacher was the greatest prophet. But the Jews of our own times have been reared in no other system; the ideas of our belief are theirs by inheritance and descent; the views of idolatry and its temples have alike crumbled into dust before its searching fire; and the new conceptions of law and doctrine which have from time to time sprung up like rank weeds in a luxuriant soil, have nevertheless not been able to acquire that consistency in arrangement, nor that harmony in detail, which we discover in the law and philosophy of Israel. And why then do these apostates, or these of little faith cast off their allegiance to the law? is it not because they do not love to be in a minority? that they dread the finger of public notoriety? that they sooner sin with the many than seek the divine favour with the few?—But how would it be were ours the multitude, could we dispense public favours, or could the profession of our faith produce wealth and distinction. O! then would these timeservers press forward to be the foremost in their profession of attachment to Israel and their ancient mode of worship, they would then be zealous among the foremost, and perhaps speak of enforcing by penal laws statutes, which now they do not value in the least. But whilst we always were in a minority, and whilst the state of the world precludes the idea of our increasing from without, we were always subjected to the danger of members quitting our communion merely to escape either the obligations of religion and be like the gentiles from a want of faith, or to join other persuasions from the more sordid motive of a tangible gain, or some personal advantage which the profession of Judaism denied them.

These causes continue to operate, whether the Jew is free in the eyes of the law of the land, or whether he is subject to restrictions for the sake of his belief; the motive for joining the majority, or to speak in proper terms, for quitting the law to gain the standing, distinction, or matrimonial alliances, which fashionable creeds only are supposed to confer, is operative with him who, not valuing the proud eminence which, if correctly viewed, our religion confers on its members, imagine that he only can reach the summit of his ambition by abandoning his people, who are few in number, for those who can bring the advantages of a numerous connexion, wealth, and family distinction. We speak merely of facts as they are presented every now and then to our view, and it is left with you, brethren, to draw your own inference. Were mine that eloquence which erst burned upon the lips of the holy prophets, or that lofty imagery in diction which graced the speech of the Psalmists: how would I appeal to you in this place to scorn such an unworthy procedure, yes, unworthy, even without resorting to the dictates of religion; for mean-spirited indeed must be that man, undeserving of regard be that woman, who would receive as a favour, as a gracious boon, that which either should not be given at all, or be conceded only to equals in every respect. If you therefore have any regard for your fair fame, if you wish not to throw discredit upon the venerable name of your pious forefathers: be more dignified in your bearing, and receive no distinctions, no admission into the society of gentiles, should these bubbles of a moment cut off your connexion with your own brothers in faith, or lead you ultimately to a desertion of the religion of Israel's house!

This state of unwillingness, which may be called strangeness to truth, or the rejection of what one believes from a motive of gain or aggrandizement, or because one fears to be noticed for the peculiarity of his views, was the cause of the rebellion on occasion of the golden calf and the sending of the spies. The doctrines of Moses stood in opposition to the fanciful doctrines of polytheism; they demanded a separation from the gentiles, and exacted obedience at some personal risk and inconvenience from his followers; and these, becoming alarmed at the one occasion, because of Moses's protracted absence, and in the other because they professed not to have confidence sufficient in divine assistance, which should enable them to conquer Palestine, threw off the allegiance they had but recently assumed, and their sinning was done as a consequence of their being, as yet, strangers to the divine rule of the law. But in the rebellion of Korah and his associates, what may be called uncleanness of the spirit, was at work. Envy and malice, engendered by the fact that by divine command one man had been raised to the everlasting priesthood, impelled the discontented to give loud vent to their complaints, saying:

רב לכם כי כל העדה כלם קדשים ובתוכם ה'
ומדוע תתנשאו על קהל ה' : במד' טז' ג':

"You assume too much; for the whole congregation are all holy, and the Lord is among them; and why will you raise yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Numb. xvi. 3.

It was not now, as on former occasions, that they professed a doubt whether the Lord be among them, but they asserted truly that the whole people of Israel was an assembly of the Lord; all its individuals had heard the precepts of truth proclaimed by the Most High himself, and as such, there could be no superiority inherent in one more than the other. But the rebels made a wrong deduction; it does not follow that, because all are equal, God should not be authorized to select for himself the most deserving for particular offices; because, though all are the same to Him, as far as they are his creatures, this does not abridge his right to bring nearer to Him for his own wise purposes, those whom He thinks most suited for this high calling. But even by human reason there can be found ample ground for the appointment of Moses to be prophet, and Aaron as the high-priest. In their servitude, Moses ventured to smite an Egyptian who maltreated an unfortunate Israelite; and when the prophet was sent to ask the liberation of his people from Pharaoh, we find that he and Aaron went upon this perilous errand, and bid defiance to the tyrant in his own palace. When now the liberation had been accomplished, who was so worthy to lead the people as their deliverer? who was so well fitted to administer for them in the house of their God, as he who had shared his brother's perils? But because so much had been given to the people, since they had seen the glory of the Lord manifested unto them, on more than one occasion, Korah and his band professed to doubt the authority of Moses in appointing his elder brother to the priesthood, and they accused him of usurping an undue ascendency over the congregation of the Lord. You will clearly perceive that the whole relation of facts connected with this outbreak of discontent, detracts not the least from the credibility of Moses or the truth of his history; and that the troubles he met with, and the unbelief so often manifested, can give no colour to the idea that, if all is true as told to us, he ought to have met with universal credence from his contemporaries. This would have been the case in good sooth, had all the people been as much impressed with their duty to God, as they had been instructed by the visible display of his power and glory. Yet, since God came only to instruct, and not to coerce the will of the people, human nature was left in its original state of proneness to sin and doubt; and hence, many manifestations of power were required to overcome the inclination to gentile customs on the one hand, and to subdue the aversion which man naturally feels to control. The elevation of Aaron, preceded though it had been, by the punishment of the worshippers of the golden calf, and followed by the death of the falsehood-speaking men who had been sent to spy out the land, could not therefore be submitted to by those who conceived themselves aggrieved, till some, who had by their daring drawn upon themselves signal punishment, had been taken out of the midst of the assembly. The operation of those feelings in our nature, love of power and the opposition to injustice, degenerated in this instance into envy of those justly raised to distinction, and a malicious contempt of the restraint which their liberty had received in the single point of the privilege to sacrifice at the altar, conferred alone on Aaron and his sons; and therefore, under pretext of maintaining the dignity of the people, the most unrighteous accusation was laid against their pious leaders, as though they had assumed power not properly belonging to them over those who were their equals.

But, as on former occasions, so was on the present the messenger of the Lord not left unprotected, and as not by the power of human arms was the kingdom of religion established at its first promulgation, so was it not now to be supported by similar agency. A remarkable feature runs through the whole history of Moses, that it was not so much the miracles he performed, as the manner which gave them value as testimonies of the truth of his mission. There is no display of unnecessary wonders in the whole five books; no showing off of a power superior to man; no premeditation or plan to arrange events to answer any given purpose; but the whole history seems to proceed step by step from the finding of the infant, exposed in a frail box on the shore of the Nile, till his glorious death as the leader of a new race of men, educated under his own eye, and destined to be the reformers of the whole human family. The same thing is observable on the present occasion. He had sent for two of the malcontents to come to him, but, as they refused, he went to their habitation. Yet even when their leader had come in this wise unto their presence, they refused to yield to the spirit which they knew dwelt in him. They bid defiance to his power, and stood in front of their tents with all their household. The moment was a critical one; it was necessary for Moses either to resign his authority, and thus confess that he had been a deceiver, or announce something to be done in which he could have no agency by any probability whatever. I need not recapitulate the catastrophe which succeeded. The instantaneous fulfilment of the threatened punishment, at the bare speaking of Moses, was of that astounding nature which left no room for doubt, and thus was the death of the transgressors, they who, from envy and malice, from uncleanness of heart, wished to separate the people from their trusty leaders, made the instrument of anew affirming that the messages announced in the name of the Lord were indeed the emanations of the Most High, the true words of the only true God.

The foregoing remarks are merely intended as an illustration of the causes which gave rise to the frequent murmurings of our ancestors in the wilderness; I am perfectly conscious that I have presented merely the outlines of an argument; but Israelites believing in the law need only this to remove any difficulty or doubt, which may arise in their study of the holy Scriptures. But one observation more for this day, and I have done. The same Providence which watched over Moses, and caused him to triumph over those who opposed the establishment of the Torah, is yet as active as ever; and the same Power which cast into the dust those who rose up to oppose the messengers of God, is not weakened by age nor circumscribed in its omnipotence. Let us, then, who love the name and law of Israel, remain undismayed amidst defections which are of constant recurrence, and arising either from want of faith or an overweening self-confidence; and let us not arraign the mercy of Providence who leaves sins to go for a long while unpunished. We have no right to expect that retribution shall come instantly upon transgression; equally unwise is it to doubt of the retribution because it is delayed. Let the wicked not dream of impunity, which does not exist; nor let the righteous doubt of the ultimate prevalence of truth and the reign of piety on earth, because wickedness flourishes awhile, and crime reigns triumphant. In his own time the Lord will purify his people, and separate from his flock those who are unworthy to be his servants; and then will joy be everywhere diffused over the earth, and peace and good-will fill the hearts of all men.

Bless and preserve us, O Lord our God! and deal mercifully with us, and judge us not according to our sinful ways, but according to thy mercy, and because of the covenant which Thou madest with our fathers. Amen.

Tamuz 2d. } 5602.
June 10th. }

DISCOURSE XII.

THE PROHIBITIONS.

To Him who sanctifies Israel with his commandments, and whose eye surveys all from the beginning unto the end of time, be praise, glory, and adoration from now and forever. Amen.

BRETHREN:

We read in the law of God as follows:

וכל שרץ העוף טמא הוא לכם לא יאכלו : כל
עוף טהור תאכלו : לא תאכלו כל נבלה לגר אשר
בשעריך תתננה ואכלה או מכור לנכרי כי עם קדוש
אתה לה' אלהיך לא תבשל גדי בחלב אמו :
דבר' יד' יט' כא' :

"And every winged insect is unclean unto you, they shall not be eaten. Every clean fowl you may eat. You shall not eat any thing that dieth of itself; thou mayest give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates that he may eat it or sell it unto an alien; for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk." Deut. xiv. 19–21.

It is well known to you that certain animals are interdicted to us to be used as food, and those which are permitted are to be eaten only in part, and in a manner prescribed by our laws and ceremonies. The origin of this limitation to our physical enjoyment is, like all other prohibitions, to be looked for in the law of God: that is to say, the law revealed by God to our fathers contains a specific ordinance which regulates the permission, otherwise granted to man, to employ the flesh of living creatures for his food; and the enjoyment of the same is then permitted only in the allowed limits, and becomes sinful if these limits are transgressed. The prohibition is too clear to admit of a doubt, for both the practice of Jews and the words of Scripture are alike illustrative of the unlawfulness of marine and terrestrial animals other than those specified as clean. It would appear, therefore, at the very first blush of the question, that no Jew, who comes to worship in the house of God, who truly feels himself to be a son of Israel, could hesitate to yield obedience to the precepts referring to this matter, no less than to any other, seeing that the same law embraces them with all the other rules prescribed to us for our guidance. Times indeed have been, when the household of all Jews was by universal assent of that degree of lawfulness, that every professor of our ancient faith might sit down at the hospitable board of any one of his brothers and eat with him in the fear of God of whatever was placed before him. Every house was then alike in the reputation of godliness, unless some positive knowledge of transgression could be alleged against it. But to our shame be it spoken, this is no longer the case in many instances; for a criminal disregard of our religion in matters relating to household duties has lately been frequently witnessed, and the sociality, once so lovely among Israelites, has by this fatal means been well-nigh banished; because the religious Jew has to inquire, before he mingles in the friendly intercourse with his friends, with whom he may be permitted to break bread, and whose invitation he is bound to refuse. Why is this? It is because men have of late not referred to the evident meaning of Scripture, but have fancied and devised a mode of interpretation entirely their own, by which manner things unlawful have been invested with a new character which did not belong to them in ancient Israel. Surely, this matter is of deep importance, and the house of God is a proper place to elucidate it for our improvement.

Let us take a view of the scheme of the Mosaic dispensation as regards things permitted and things forbidden, to see what is the foundation thereof? only the will of God, who by his word permitted us some, and, by the same authority, forbade us other things. When, therefore, anything is denied to us, it is not because the origin of the prohibition is one thing or the other, which we might suppose, but simply because it is the will of God as expressed in the divine code. Now, the modern transgressors of the law of cleanliness fancy to believe, that the Bible is not to be understood according to its evident meaning, but by some laws of interpretation and by a species of liberal reasoning not deducible from its text. We speak not of those who pretend to be unbelievers in revelation, but of those who profess to be Jews and avow their determination to obey the Bible—as they understand it. But a human understanding of the divine law, arbitrarily assumed by every one who chooses to offer an explanation as he understands the text, is evidently not the standard by which we ought to regulate our lives; for in this manner there would be no uniformity in our actions, and no certain standard by which to transmit our faith and our rules of conduct to those who are to live after us. Could thus the law of God be a sure guide? could thus the father teach his son to abide by the law of Moses, when a thousand different ways are shown to him as the right path of salvation? There would evidently be a multiplicity of religions, a practical diversity of conduct, although every one should profess to abide by the same law, with the sole limitation "as he understands it." It is needless to urge upon your consideration, brethren, the self-evident conviction that it was for no such purpose that the Lord could have given us "one law and one statute," which means a guide, sure and stable, a fountain ever flowing with the same wholesome waters of salvation for *all* Israel.

Now, in reference to the domestic prohibitions, regarding food and culinary utensils, despite of the derision of our opponents, the law has given us specific directions. We are interdicted from eating the flesh of the quadrupeds, birds, fishes, reptiles, and insects enumerated in the text; we are prohibited from eating the blood of all warm-blooded animals, the fat, that, namely, which was burnt upon the altar, of all that class denominated domestic cattle, that is to say, the ox, the sheep, and the goat; and at last the slaughtering of all the permitted quadrupeds and birds was to be done in the manner handed down to us from Sinai, by which interdict all the flesh of animals killed by a gentile, destroyed by wild beasts, or having died of themselves, is likewise unlawful for us to eat. But this is not all; the vessels in which forbidden food has been placed must undergo purification according to the ordinance promulgated in the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, 21st to 23d verses: "And Elazar, the priest, said unto the men of war who had gone to battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses, Only the gold and the silver, the copper, the iron, the tin, and the lead, everything that cometh into the fire, ye shall make go through the fire, and it shall be clean, only it shall be purified with the waters of sprinkling, and whatsoever cometh not into the fire ye shall cause to go through the water." This is a prohibition against the indiscriminate employment of vessels for our use, after having been appropriated for the food of gentiles, since the clause inserted, "nevertheless it shall be purified with the waters of sprinkling," proves that the ordinance of fire and water purification refers not to the cleansing of the vessels after having been defiled by a contact with the dead; for this was to be effected solely by the sprinkling with the waters of sprinkling, as the ashes of the sacrificed *red cow* were called, for which I refer you to the nineteenth chapter of Numbers. One would naturally suppose that all the prohibitions alluded to were sufficiently explicit in their tenor, so as not to admit of doubt and contradiction. Nevertheless they, who always try to make the profession of religion one of ease and convenience, have discovered a ready means to break the force of the biblical text by a reasoning and translation of their own. It is this: they profess in words the highest veneration for the Scriptures; nothing is, according to them, holier, purer, and better adapted for the moral government than the Pentateuch; yet there is a "but," an exception as they deem it between the moral or permanent, and the ceremonial or temporary. They, forsooth, in this way separate the law, "as they understand it," into essential and non-essential. Now for the division. The moral part, or the alleged permanent and essential, consists of ideas of belief, spiritual worship, and the intercourse between man and man, with perhaps the observance of the Sabbath, as commemorative of the creation by the Everlasting One. The ceremonial, or the temporary and non-essential, is said to embrace all that they term health-laws, and acts of personal religion, public ceremonies in the temple, and, to sum up, all the institutions which concern not the moral government of mankind. Whence the authority for thus separating the divine precepts has been derived, I am not able to divine; but that many professing Judaism act up to this mode of expounding the Scriptures is a melancholy fact, too palpable to be denied. But the reason often offered is this: The law was promulgated under peculiar circumstances, and in a country peculiarly constituted by the nature of its soil and climate; and that hence ordinances perfectly applicable to the distant East, fail to be binding on us now who are so differently situated. In reference to the particular ordinance before us to-day, that of abstaining from certain articles of food, or dietetic interdict, it is averred that Moses instituted the same as purely a health-law; since the flesh of many animals, together with the blood and fat, would prove highly injurious in the sands of Arabia and even the cultivated district of Palestine, and that all that was meant was to enforce such rules, as would be best calculated to preserve the health and insure the long life of the members of the Jewish commonwealth. In consequence of this assumption, they would make us believe, that the prohibition is not applicable to us who, living in a more temperate climate, where neither shell-fish nor the flesh of the swine and the hare are injurious to health, may partake of things the cause of whose prohibition does nowise apply to us.

The scheme is surely, I will confess it, an ingenious one; it first makes religion very easy, and then gives a reason why this lightening of the burden is to be viewed as pleasing to God.—But with all the show of philosophical fairness, with all the exhibition of profound learning, it lacks but one feature to render it convincing, and this is nothing else than the stamp of truth.—The Bible, in its own words, does not divide itself into the permanent and temporary; it does nowhere allege that one command is holier than the other; it does not state in so many words that any of its laws were to last only for a period and then cease to exist, unless they were from their very nature intended solely for the time being, such as the killing of the first Passover lamb with the peculiar ceremonies intended exclusively for the once, and the gathering of the manna six days during every week, calculated only for the time that our ancestors travelled through the wilderness, and, as concerns us of the present day, all the regulations with regard to the sacrifices; since the whole scheme of offerings and priesthood is connected with the existence of the temple in Jerusalem, as the place chosen by God to let his name dwell there, which evidently means that nowhere else can such sacrifices be brought. For so we read (Deut. xii. 13, 14): "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place which thou seest; but in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose in one of thy tribe, there shalt thou offer thy burnt-offerings, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee." In the second book of Samuel, chapter xxiv., we have now an account of the plague which afflicted Israel in the time of David, and we read in verse 18: "And Gad came that day unto David, and said unto him, Go up, erect an altar unto the Lord on the threshing-floor of Aravnah, the Jebusite." This command was given because, as said in verse 16: "And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of Aravnah, the Jebusite," when he was bidden to stay the plague. And, in conclusion, we are told (verse 25): "And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings." On this spot afterwards Solomon the son of David built the house which he consecrated unto the Lord, and which our great Father hallowed by his glory, made evident by the visible presence of the cloud which filled the house, when the priests brought thither the ark of the covenant. In this manner, I state this merely incidentally, was pointed out the spot where sacrifices would be acceptable, and by inference they are prohibited in every other place upon the face of the whole earth; and consequently our dispersion and the destruction of the temple have suspended—mind, not abolished—the ordinances and laws relating to the sacrificial scheme, and the rules of the priesthood where they relate to the sacrifices only; but all the others, although the priests cannot now trace their genealogy, are in full force, and binding upon all whom the public voice hails as sons of Aaron, who was consecrated to minister unto the Lord, himself and his sons forever as a perpetual line of priests, selected to stand before the Lord to serve Him and to bless in his name.

But we must leave this matter to be more clearly elucidated hereafter, and revert to where we started from.—We maintain that the Bible can be explained only by the words of the context and the manner of interpretation as received from our fathers, which is at best nothing but an exposition of how they acted up to the words of Scripture, no matter what they, who do not understand the subject, may assert to the contrary. We maintain, farther, that any method of explaining away what the phraseology employed by the sacred writers does evidently imply, is nothing else than to destroy all authority of revelation as a rule of life. For, if I am permitted to say that the precept "Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing" means either any disgusting substance, such as spiders, reptiles, and food unsightly or nauseously served up, or things which disagree with a person's constitution, without appealing to the context to see what is meant by "abominable thing:" I am at liberty to do the same with every other precept, and stop short in the middle of a verse or text without regarding what follows. And, farther, if I can interpret the same text to say that it relates to the preservation of my health in general, and that under a change of circumstances and situations where such a result could not ensue the command is inoperative: I have evidently the same authority to interpret in this manner every other text of Scripture; and thus, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" might mean, that I may rest when my personal interest, which to many persons is their paramount rule of life, does not interfere with my resting on a day which the majority employ in labours of worldly gain and in pursuit of amusement denied otherwise to me as a member of the Jewish church. So, also, "Thou shalt not commit murder," must mean, if I am not too much provoked by a taunt, an insult, or a personal injury.* "But," say they who argue in this manner, "we apply not this rule to moral laws, only to those which are evidently ceremonial, and have no bearing upon the inward man." Granted; but how can we prevent every man from picking out such rules as the proper moral ones, with the rejection of those which others include in this list, if we permit any departure from the simple words of the Bible? Is it something so unheard of that Sabbath-breaking is defended by just such reasons as I have given to you? is it something so very unheard of that a man steeps his murderous hand in the warm life's-blood of his fellow-man, simply because he is offended? and when such a deed of violence is perpetrated before the face of the sun, in the midst of a crowd in the street of a populous city, is not the slayer of his brother defended by such a reason, if reason it dare be called, that he slew a man, a being created in the image of God, because, and simply because, the murdered victim had given him some provocation, which in the false code of honour as understood by men of vile passions and of godless violence is called a sufficient cause of homicide?—Where, then, is the safety for the latitudinarian commenting on the Bible? where are we to set the limit when once we break down the boundaries and landmarks which our ancients have set?—We say, and this as Israelites, nowhere would there be safety; a strict construction is demanded, and we cannot explain away, by assigning a reason which is not given, any precept which we find recorded.

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* In fact many interpret it so; and hence has arisen the barbarous code and practice of the duel.

Now, as regards the prohibited meats, we are asked for the reason of the enactment. If we say that this is their unwholesome tendency, we must be able to make this apparent from the words of the Bible. Yet we shall search in vain to find the most distant allusion to such a cause; nowhere is it hinted that the flesh of the swine or of the eagle would cause disease; nowhere is blood prohibited, because it might shorten the life of man. And surely if God made this enactment, from such a motive, He would have so recorded it; and as this record is not to be found, it is evident that no such reason influenced our Supreme Legislator. But even suppose that this had been so: where do you find a clause limiting the enactment to the deserts of Arabia or the fertile lands of Palestine? Yet, even yield this, too, we again ask, Are Israelites not now residents in lands equally subject to the same degree of heat and excessive moisture as were the countries just named? Nay, is not a part of our people even now residing in the very countries under consideration? or is there one law for the Jew of the East and another law for the Jew of the West? And where will you set the limit as regards geographical position, where the prohibition is to cease and the permission to commence? It were easy to multiply proofs to exhibit the fallacy of the idea which bases the domestic economy of the Mosaic code upon the preservation of health and life as the ostensible reason of its legislation, although it admits of no doubt that obedience thereto will best promote the great blessing of a healthy soul in a healthy body; and since the life we enjoy is a gift of the Lord, the true servants of God will not idly or carelessly trifle with what He has bestowed on them for his own benignant and wise purposes.

But even inference cannot be adduced to prove that Scripture lays down the unwholesomeness of the prohibited things as a cause of their interdiction; for these are the words of our text: "Thou shalt not eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou mayest give it unto the stranger that is within thy gates that he may eat it, or sell it unto the alien." Were it, now, that meat of this kind should be absolutely unwholesome, it would be interdicted to the stranger also; and in truth we know, on the other hand, of cases where an animal comes to its death by an accident nowise referable to disease. And yet there is no exception in favour of such a dying of itself to permit it to the Israelite; and in the same manner, since the stranger, too, is an object of God's care, it would be absurd to suppose that the law would encourage us to give him food of which we knew beforehand that it would prove absolutely injurious to his health or life. But the reason assigned is quite a different one: "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God," meaning things permitted to the stranger and alien, who have not been sanctified by the acceptance of the law, are interdicted to the son of Israel, because he is bound by the law; and therefore every member of that people, which has been chosen as the sanctuary of the

Lord, is bound from the reason of his membership to call that abominable which the law has so declared; not because it is injurious to his health, granted even that this should also be the case, but because it is *prohibited.* And so we read in Leviticus xi, 43, 45: "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that you should be defiled thereby. For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy; neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord, that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy; for I am holy." We are here told, first, that creeping things are abominable *only* in the eyes of the law, and secondly, that they who live under the law would be defiled by partaking of them as food. We are farther ordered to be holy, because the Lord is holy. How is this to be done? Are we to abstain from all worldly pursuits? spend our days in fasting and our nights in prayer? are we to shun the intercourse with our fellow-men, secluded in solitary cells amidst the retreats of a rocky glen, an impenetrable forest, or the inaccessible sands of the desert? are we to be distinguished from other men by the colour of our shoes or the fashion of our garments? Indeed, if such had been the command, all these things or any of them would have been requisites to holiness; but the requirements are very different: obedience to the words of the Law is demanded, and this one word, obedience, comprises the whole idea of sanctification as ordained by the holy One of Israel.

In farther illustration we will quote some verses from the twentieth chapter of Leviticus (22–26): "Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my ordinances and do them, that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, may not cast you forth. And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you; for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the Lord your God, who have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between the unclean fowls and clean; and you shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated unto you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." In this passage, the vocation of Israel is clearly pointed out. The holy God, whose eyes survey all from the birth of nature to her death, has from the multitude of families of man severed one nation, and this a people few in number, to be his chosen treasure, that they might be the witnesses of his glory and power. These favoured men were not to act like others, and do as they please, and live only for the gratification of their sensual desires; but they should be limited, circumscribed, and hedged in by ordinances which He, who had sanctified them to his service, might find useful, both for their temporal and everlasting welfare. He wanted to sever them from the mass of idolatry and unbelief, and from those who worship not the Most Holy, and who regard not his law. Acts of kindness towards every man He enjoined upon his servants; they should show mercy to the stranger who came to their land, and even to the bondman who should flee thither from his master; but they should be preserved from a too close union with those who were not Israelites, and this should be effected by barring them from a partaking of the food which was by Him interdicted and mingling with gentiles in wedlock. The latter prohibition we all know is not to be ascribed to an inferiority of the races, either in bodily or mental endowment; but only to the danger of misleading those who intermarry with strangers from the adherence to the One God. This is the sole basis, as we find frequently recorded, of several ordinances; and so also is the domestic arrangement of Israel ascribable to the ordinances of their mighty King, who forbade them many things to others permitted, that they might be preserved in the path of righteousness in which He desired them to travel. This is evidently the meaning of the words אשר הברלתי לכם לטמא "which I have separated *unto* you as unclean," not as the common version has it, "which I have separated *from* you;" and it says accordingly, that the interdict is not from any inherent evil in the flesh of the swine, or eagle, or shark, or crocodile; but because these animals have been separated from the mass of permitted things as unclean to the house of Israel.

If this view is the evident deduction from the language of Scripture, and that it is so is borne out by the authority not alone of the words themselves, but by the assertion of the great luminaries of our people down to our own days: it follows that the obligation of abstinence promulgated by Moses, is not weakened by the change of territory and climate to which we as a nation have been subjected. We are yet a people separate and distinct from the nations of the earth; in our worship we call yet upon the same God who spoke audibly to our fathers at Ur and at Sinai; and as yet all sons of men do not call upon Him with one voice and with one accord. Where then is the inferential permission to go and eat with the gentiles of things not permitted to us, of food separated unto Jacob as unclean? It is unworthy of rational beings to be so wedded to mere brutal enjoyment, that they cannot overcome a passing inclination for things which are only calculated to gratify the palate; it speaks but little of self-culture in any individual, if he must fly to prohibited food in the midst of plenty, in the midst of the thousands of objects which are ready to sustain life and strength. And still such must be the motives which counsel a transgression, seeing that the breaking down of the law by inferring a reason which is not given nor hinted at, is both unscriptural and against every sound rule of argument and interpretation.

It is therefore incumbent upon every Israelite to regard well the law in this respect no less than in matters of, what the world calls, graver import, though to us, as children of the law, every precept is equally holy, since the whole Pentateuch is the emanation of the same wisdom.—We should reflect that, whereas the whole world is the Lord's, we are also subject to his uncontrolled disposal. Farther, that every permission is derived from Him, and that consequently there is intrinsically no hardship in his denying us whatever He deems unclean. Our aim should be the attainment of holiness, because He our God is holy; this can be done only through obedience. That servant is, however, not obedient who follows his master only when he understands clearly the reason of the order he has received, or when it suits his fancy or convenience to obey. Even so is it with us; we have received mandates of various kinds from our heavenly Master: of some we know the reason why! of others we do not; some may interfere with our personal convenience, whilst others are pleasant and easy of execution. If then we wish to excel in our striving for the attainment of his gracious favour, we should implicitly obey his behests without asking the motives of their enactment; enough for us to know that the Lord commands, and it is ours to listen submissively. One effect this will have upon us above mere mechanical obedience, is the attainment of more spiritual light as we proceed onward in righteousness; so that things once obscure to us in the outset of our career will become luminous with wisdom and light, even as the sun sheds more warmth and effulgence as he ascends from his rising to his meridian height. If all our brethren act so, if naught but dire necessity ever induces them to transgress: how sweetly, how unitedly will the household of Israel then dwell.—Every table will be permitted to all alike; the fear of God will preside in every domicil, and as the old men and the lisping infants gather around the social boards, the anthem of praise may becomingly ascend on high as though the very place for earthly enjoyment were an altar dedicated to the Most Holy God. And why should this not be? is not the whole earth full of his glory? is not his presence felt by the humble and pious in every spot, in every relation of life? and why then should his service be absent when we sit down to refresh and invigorate our bodies by the food which his bounty alone has provided for us? Yet how can this be fittingly done, if we, in disobedience of the will of the Lord, taste of things which He forbids to us; if we by our sinfulness tell Him that we wish not holiness in the manner He prescribes the same as attainable by us? O then will his presence not be felt in our homesteads, and his grace will not consecrate the viands He has created but not for us! But if we serve Him in our daily avocations, as well as in great matters; if every step of life is regulated by his will; if we seek his favour by every attainable act of obedience; if his word, his law, his promises are ever before our eyes, ever impressed on our spirits: then will holiness be indeed within our reach; and when at the conclusion of our repast we raise the cup full of wine to bless the Lord for his grace, goodness and mercy with which He sustains all the creatures which He has created in his abundant kindness, we have in truth brought an offering befitting children of obedience, and a sacrifice not unworthy of the acceptance of the universal Father of all; and thus will daily and hourly be drawn closer the bonds which unite us to our Maker, till our spirit arises hence into his presence to dwell in his presence till time shall be no more!

And may thine, O Lord! be the praise of all flesh, may every spirit feel that thine is the power, and thine the glory, and may every creature be led to know Thee, and to worship Thee in truth and faith. Amen.

Ab 29th. } 5602.
Aug. 5th. }

DISCOURSE XIII.

THE SANCTUARY.

O God! Thou whose greatness is not comprised within the limits of the innumerable spheres which have sprung from thy almighty hand, deign to dwell among the children of thy covenant, even the house of Israel whom thou hast redeemed to be thine; and let thy glory fill the places whither they resort, in all their dispersions to ascribe honour and praise to thy blessed name, which is exalted above all blessings and praises, and concealed even to the ministers of light who, in throngs innumerable, all worship at the foot of the throne of thy mercy. Amen.

Brethren!

How exalted were the feelings, and how ardent the desire which animated the heart of the holy singer, when he burst forth in praise of the delights he hoped to experience in the house of his God; and how must he have felt gratified when, having beheld the crown of glory dwelling on Zion, he found all his expectations more than fulfilled by the reality of the greatness far exceeding the excited imagination of anticipated bliss. For, at the happy time when he lived, there was yet one temple, whither all Israel resorted to adore the Most High in the beauty of holiness and unity; and there was one altar where their God was pleased to accept their offerings and their prayers. And this was the place where the one people, selected as the guardian of the covenant, dwelt as a light to the nations and as a beacon to those who walked in darkness; and they therefore, who, like the sons of Korah, were privileged to watch at the gates of the sanctuary, drank in to fulness the great effulgence of light, and the ecstacy of being surrounded with a thousand tokens of their Maker's power, with a thousand proofs of his mercy and goodness. It was not, therefore, the great splendour of the temple-structure which he describes; he dwells not in terms of admiration upon its magnificent architecture, its columns, its almost wonderful fabrics of brass and gold, its thousand decorations which were the admiration of all the earth, and which had engaged an entire people almost to rear and to elaborate, but he refers to the internal holiness, the soul-tranquillizing power which the pious there could experience. And these are his words, which, for sweetness, are unsurpassed in any writing of any people:

מה ידידות משכנותיך ה׳ צבאות נכספה וגם כלתה
נפשי לחצרות ה׳ לבי ובשרי ירננו אל אל חי : גם
צפור מצאה בית ודרור קן לה אשר שתה אפרחיה
את מזבחותיך ה׳ צבאות מלכי ואלהי : אשרי יושבי
ביתך עוד יהללוך סלה : תהל׳ פר׳ ב׳–ה׳ :

> "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul desireth, yea, it longeth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh join in singing praises unto the living God. Even the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may place her young in thy altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God! Happy are they who dwell in thy house, continually they will praise Thee. Selah." Psalm lxxxiv. 2–5.

The Psalmist thus shadows forth his delight at the thought of revisiting the sanctuary of his God, and exhibits to us the causes which awaken this pleasurable emotion. We have said already, that it was not the elegance of the structure which filled his imagination, but the association of holiness and truth which tend jointly and separately to elevate the mind above the level of earthly things and transient enjoyments; it was not the splendid temple, but its being the tabernacle of his God, which called forth the Psalmist's admiration. His soul, he says, longeth for the courts of the Lord; for there he can devote his heart to meditate on the great power of the Lord, on his wisdom, on his mercy. All the feelings of devotion will vibrate in unison, where the whole object of everything around him is the glory of God, and the promotion of trust in his goodness; and praise therefore will spring forth spontaneously from lips glowing with the enthusiastic love, by which the heart is filled. The hymn thus uttered will not require the sluggish prompting of a tardy will; the bending of the knee will not be the mechanical action enforced by human authority, as a token of conformity to the popular religion. O no! there where God evidently dwells, a holy shower will, so to say, moisten with its refreshing drops every one subject to its influence;

a rushing onward to be foremost among the most zealous will characterize every one, who means in truth to be a servant of the glorious Essence, whom we term the living God, the Undying, Everlasting, the Holy One of Israel! And then in his presence all is peace, all is joy! Yea, the sparrow may find his domicil under the eaves of the Lord's house, and the swallow can securely lodge her young under the shelter of his altar; for no rude hand will there disturb the innocent nestlings which claim their food from the Lord of all, who pours out in abundance his bounty to the towering forest ox, and the humming insect that glances like a point of light in the beams of the sun. Yea, peace is there, and harmony rules there, if they who come to worship feel their insignificance in comparison with the Being whom they come to adore; if man truly is conscious, that in the presence of his Maker he is weak, powerless, and corrupt; if he of limited intellect will but deign to bow in submission to Him who gives wisdom to the wise, and who sees and searches the heart. For they, who thus act, will indeed imagine themselves in the house and at the table of their King; to whom reverence is meet; to whom appertain majesty and glory; before whom strife and discord are unseemly exhibitions of traitorous neglect in his service; since where all are servants, where all are alike in mortality, in accountability, in dependence, it behoves no one to raise himself above his fellows, and to assume an authority which belongs alone to the Immortal, and in which the perishable sons of earth have no share. They will, moreover, be alive to the consideration that this King is their God, whose power is not liable to decay, whose wisdom is not subject to the corroding influence of the tooth of time, before which all delegated power is sure to crumble; but they will be impressed with the solemn conviction that whatever is done at any moment of time, be it virtue, be it vice, will always live in his memory, to be recompensed by weal or by woe, whenever the hour of reward has come, whenever the moment of retribution has arrived. Such a worship of the Most High is not a degrading servitude; it is not one which enslaves the mind, or throws superstitious trammels over the free spiritual essence implanted in man; on the contrary, it is a pleasant converse with the Supreme Father, a return, as far as the creature can offer it, for the many benefits which have been heaped upon it from the moment it first entered into life. And the place where we obtain the greatest amount of incentives for this service, is, of all others, the one we should desire to visit; and hence, lovely must be the tabernacle, desirable the courts, where meet as one the noble band who have consecrated their days, not to the pursuit of selfish gains, not to the acquisition of worldly goods, and a perishable renown, but to the spreading of good-will among men, and the extension of the glory of their God. Happy, therefore, are all those who dwell in the house of God, who resort thither to confirm themselves, and to assist in confirming others in the upholding of the sublime truths which they have received; in eradicating the errors of a faulty education, to which unfortunately they may have been subjected, and in warding off the approach of perverted ideas of God and worship which may, perchance, have been imbibed from an intercourse with the world and men of sin. And when these results, applicable to the various classes of worshippers, have been obtained, then, indeed, will praise ascend on high from souls filled with heavenly fire, from spirits touched with the light which alone springs from God. And when from youth till age, from the dawning of intellect till the hour of death, the same unvarying course has been pursued, if the dwelling in God's house has not been merely for the one hour, for the one day, for the one year, but constantly renewed at every epoch of life: how blissful will then be the permanence of this abiding, how grateful the hymn which arises continually from lips burning with the holy inspiration of truth derived from God, of wishes centring all in the Lord, of hopes which alone can be fulfilled by Him,—by Him who is the same in youth and in age, who supports us by our hand at the moment when the infant first opens his eyes to the light and beauty, and shades, and joys, and sorrows of this life, and when the trembling soul shrinks within herself at the moment when racking pains rend the tenement of clay, and bid the spirit to flee away to the place whence it sprung, the fountain of life, which is in the presence of Him, our living Father.

Well was the sanctuary on Zion calculated to awaken these thoughts in the minds of our forefathers. For there were the prophets who spoke the truths they had received in the hearing of a mighty people, made mighty by the possession of the law under which they lived in security. And there were the incentives to piety appealing momentarily to the souls of all. Just as the law commanded, so was the worship organized. There was the altar of burnt-offering which a hundred priests daily surrounded to make atonement for the people in whose behalf they administered. There was the golden altar, whence morning and evening ascended the smell of the sweet incense made, in strict conformity to the ordinance of the law, by skilful and obedient hands. There, too, were the orders of Levites who, with their high-sounding instruments and uplifted voices, made the courts of the Lord vocal with the melodies derived from David, from Ethan, from Assaph, the sons of Korah, and other children of song, melodies yet unrivalled, from which poets of all ages have caught the fire of inspiration, and which all the world has adopted as its vehicle of praise. There were likewise the courses of the people to appear daily as the delegates of all Israel to witness the offerings made for all the land, at the place which the Lord had chosen to let his name dwell there. Here also sat that august assembly of the wisest and best of our then happy country, who dispensed the knowledge of that law which was the study of their lives, and by the decision of whom all the people were governed. At that time too the profession of our religion carried with it no disgrace, no stigma; the name of Israel was not a byword, the name of Jew was no term of reproach. No inducement of worldly gain tempted to a violation of the Sabbath, no prospect of political preferment counselled the ungodly or the wavering to deny his Jewish lineage, or to forswear publicly the faith which his fathers had taught him. But thrice every year all the sons of Israel, as one, flocked together to offer up their orisons, and to bring their offerings before the shrine where the tables of the covenant were deposited; thrice every year they renewed in the courts of their God the political bond of union which made them one people. It is therefore easy to imagine, how an ardent follower of the Mosaic law must have felt when the season came round again, when he should appear at Jerusalem; how already many days before the appointed time, at the shore of the great sea, at the foot of Carmel, on the summit of Tabor, in the shades of Lebanon, and on the margin of the Arabian Gulf, in fertile plain or in sterile wilderness, he pictured to his mind the multitudinous throng clustering together upon every road, from every avenue of our happy, peaceful land, the torrent swelling every hour, increasing imperceptibly every moment, till with a host of flocks and rich gifts, with banners waving in the wind, with music, lulling the spirit, springing from a thousand tubes, answered by a thousand harps, echoed by millions of voices, the mighty army burst with its interminable length and its countless hosts into the rejoicing streets of the glorious Jerusalem, an army that came not to conquer, but to do homage to the great King who sat enthroned, invisible among them yet felt, and known and acknowledged by all, on the spot sacred to miracles, hallowed by a thousand mercies, the hill of Moriah, the centre, the glory of all the earth. Well might the poet sigh if this spectacle were denied him to witness; well might he exclaim, "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!" when he was among the glad array in the holy courts, especially if it was the first time that he was permitted to administer with his brothers at the altar, and to drink in deeply the enthusiastic devotion which animated so many around him, who all were intent only on worshipping God, the One, the Immortal, the Everlasting, and on sealing with the whole tenor of their life their claim to the brotherhood in the house of Israel.

But now, alas! the busy throng fills no longer the highways of Palestine; the ark of the covenant is taken away from us, and the crowd of worshippers has vanished from the temple, which has fallen a prey to the devouring flame which the enemies of our name kindled in the holy place of our God. Were it now, that the Psalmist's desire had only been kindled by the outward splendour of that house, and by the pomp and grandeur arising only from the peaceful state and political importance of our nation: then indeed would we have nothing left to awaken in our hearts, in our state of captivity and dispersion, a desire akin to his desire. But independently of the outward attendant circumstances which glorified the temple, there was a something which was inherent in its very nature, and was not liable to the destruction which awaited it so soon as the people, who had reared it in honour of God, forsook the law which He had given them. This something was the fact, that it was a structure consecrated to the Creator of the world, whose abiding is not limited to walls reared by human hands. It is true that the site of the temple was the place chosen for the dwelling of his name, where alone He ordained that our sacrifices should be offered. But it is also true that He is nigh unto us in whatever place we call upon Him; for all the earth is the seat of his glory. So, then, at the time that the temple yet stood, people were not confined to its precincts alone for prayer and religious assemblies, or else the periods of devotion and instruction would have been too few and limited in usefulness. They however met weekly at least to pour out in a common assembly, each one for himself and through a chosen organ, their wishes before the throne of Grace, and to have the law of God read aloud to them for their information, and to listen unto such admonitions as they who were familiar with the ordinances addressed to their consideration. The periodical reunions in the temple were to renew at every recurrence of them the connecting link which made all Israel one people; but the weekly and daily meetings for prayer and instruction were for the constant feeding of the sacred fire, which our religion should kindle ever and anon in the heart of every son of Israel. Hence probably the Psalmist does not say, "How lovely *is* thy tabernacle," by which the one great house would have been conveyed, but "how lovely *are* thy tabernacles," evidently indicating every place of assembly for the glory of God, though inferior in dignity, and entirely void of the splendour which distinguished the dwelling of the Lord at Jerusalem. When then the outward grandeur was taken away by the irruption of the gentiles into our lovely inheritance, the presence of the God of Israel was not thereby removed; He does not, indeed, manifest himself openly before our eyes, the evidence of his favour does not fill outwardly the places we consecrate to his Name: yet can we doubt that He is near, even now among us, to attend to our prayers, to listen to our entreaty, to give us his spirit, to bless and to shield us? Do we not continue the minor assemblies for the glorification of our Father? is not his law yet proclaimed in our meetings on the Sabbaths and appointed seasons? do we not attest here, again and again, our firm adherence to the law He has prescribed as our rule of action.—It is therefore in our power, though in a minor degree, to share the longing of the Psalmist for the courts of our God; we too can feel ourselves lifted up above the things of the earth by a resort to his dwelling. We have the assurance that He will be to us a small sanctuary in the lands whither we shall have been scattered for our sins, as He spoke through his prophet Ezekiel at a time, when, through our transgressions, the temple was burnt, and our people carried away captive, few only being left, through means of the destruction which the enemy's sword had wrought among us. It was then, I say, that He promised to dwell among us in the minor sanctuaries which we might dedicate to his worship; and thus, as in the temple of old, it will not be the elegance of the building, not the splendour of columns and ornaments, not a thousand bright lights, nor the harmony of song or instruments, which will constitute the holiness of the places of our gathering, but the spirit of the Lord which is among us, when we are assembled in sincerity, truth and humility to sacrifice our souls as a willing offering to his service, and to open our hearts in prayer to his all-seeing eye. If the preservation of our race throughout all the tribulations to which it has been subjected be any evidence of this holy Presence; if the fact that at every emergency in our history, since our captivity commenced, wonderful men have arisen as though they had been prompted by an inward spirit to guide their less favoured brethren, when apostacy was forced upon us by the persecution of the gentiles, or when a dereliction from the righteous way became general through the natural proneness of man to sin, be a sure token that the Lord is in the midst of our assemblies, and who can deny it? then, indeed, have the blessed promises of which we speak been literally accomplished, yes fulfilled to the utmost signification of the words of Scripture. Hence it is, that they who feel a pleasure in their connexion with the race of promise hasten to the meetings of their brothers, they love to hear their national tongue, they love its sounds as they are addressed to the throne where Mercy sits enshrined to listen and to forgive. They feel that fearful is the place which has been dedicated to the Name of the One who is great, holy, good, and true; they feel, indeed, that his portals on earth are the gates of heaven, where the righteous must enter here below, to earn their admissions into the portals of bliss when their perishable life is ended. This consideration will account for the ardour which is so generally felt among us to erect houses of prayer; this will account for the surprising fact that, even when death was the prize of acknowledging Judaism, its professors would meet in secret, in subterranean vaults and in solitary caverns to constitute themselves an assembly of Israelites, in order to be blessed by the Spirit of God, that it might direct them aright, and point their steps to the road of truth which leads onward to happiness.

So also acted our predecessors who, few in number, and nearly all strangers on this land, and most of whom had côme to seek a home in the then almost wilderness, where at this day are beautiful towns and cultivated fields, erected, somewhat more than sixty years ago, a house of prayer on the spot where we are assembled this day. A lovely ardour, a holy desire to tread the courts of their God impelled them,—though few had wealth, and whilst a fierce war with the powerful "queen of the isles" paralyzed their energies, and though the greater number were men who were yet young in years,—to devote a liberal portion of their substance to the holy work; and the fruits of their striving was the building up of this congregation, which, though often weakened by death, by backsliding, by temporary divisions, and by emigration, has stood thus far a minor luminary among the lights of Israel. Of those who assisted in laying the foundation of this house the greater part have gone to their reward, and but one or two yet survive who, then young and active, find their hair now blanched by the frosts of near eighty winters, and their steps hurrying on to a grave which in the course of nature must soon receive them. These few stand a monument of an age that is gone; but of the first builders, the sons and grandsons to the fourth generation are among us to transmit to a yet later posterity the work which their fathers have so worthily accomplished. And we who ourselves have come across the bosom of the deep Atlantic sea, and they whose immediate progenitors took up their abode in this famous city are, with the first, heirs of the fruits of the first founders of our congregation. We all, therefore, have but one object, this is to preserve and to perpetuate the good institution which now embraces us within its walls. Let us continue to uphold whatever good we enjoy here; and let us be sedulous, too, to add according to the letter and spirit of the law to the inheritance which we have acquired. It is easy to find fault with deficiencies and irregularities which we all acknowledge to exist; but let us do a nobler thing, let each of us contribute to the extent of his power to the removing of whatever evil we may discover. If this place of worship is not enough visited by those whose privilege it is to resort hither, let the wrong be removed; let all feel a desire to come frequently into the courts of the Lord, and there sing with us the praises unto the living God. If, occasionally, there are some who observe not proper decorum, which beseems a house of prayer, let their altered behaviour prove that they now feel that, when here, they are in the immediate presence of their King and God. If they, who meet here, are not sufficiently versed in the language and the law of Israel, let them come here frequently, and dwell in the house of God, and learn there to become familiar with our national tongue, and to love those who are, like them, sons and daughters of Israel, and to value the birthright which a gracious Providence has conferred on them in exempting them from calling on a god who cannot save, and in permitting them to worship in their hymns and their prayers the One, who by his speech created the heavens, and, with the breath of his mouth, all their host. If there be any who are ignorant of the ways of God, let those who are able strain every nerve to spread the truth which they already possess, that others may understandingly follow in the path of righteousness which they are treading. In short, let our periodical meeting be a perpetual union of spirit, and move us all to do right ourselves and to cause others to do likewise. And as our predecessors, regardless of worldly outlay, founded this house and finished it, let us not be behind them in supporting it with our increased means and more extended substance;—not with a view of advancing the temporal interests of any one man or a set of men, but to extend the usefulness of the Synagogue whither we have so long resorted, and to prove to those who will come after us, that we have not been unmindful of our duty in endowing properly the sanctuary which was delivered to our safe-keeping.

Circumstances have occurred which have rendered it imperative upon the heads of our congregation to demand a small additional annual contribution for the support of the public expenditures; the burden itself is but slight, indeed, and would not be felt at all were it not for the revulsion, which has lately annihilated what many thought hoards of wealth beyond the approach of any contingency. But it is not to be denied that, in the aggregate, our means are ample enough for all that is demanded of us, and, if the necessity should occur, that much heavier burdens could readily be borne. All that is required for every one to do is, to take a proper view of the immense importance of properly supporting the establishments for worship, for education and public interment among us, in each of which it is absolutely requisite that we should be independent of our gentile friends and neighbours. I trust, therefore (I speak this not only for myself, but in the name also of the worthy president of our congregation) that each and all will not refuse to bear their share in the additional outlays which circumstances, known to you all, have rendered necessary. Were it requisite, the details could easily be furnished; but we do not deem it proper to encumber an address, on the necessity and beauty of public worship, with details that properly belong to a financial report. One thing, however, I must add: it is, that no one should properly view himself as aggrieved in any regulation which the congregation may, from time to time, adopt for its government; for in every community, where the majority necessarily rules, there must always be some, more or less, whose views will have to yield to the decision of the many. Not alone in our establishment, but in every institution almost where men deliberate and govern, there have always been causes for complaint and opportunities for fault-finding. Violent opposition and threats of division only irritate the feelings and increase the evil; but a patient, I do not say a tame, submission to any slight grievance, will much more readily open the door for a speedy redress, than a course dictated by violence and an insisting upon one's own views of right. Let me, therefore, entreat you, whilst I am speaking for the first time here on congregational matters, to do everything in your power, individually and collectively, to promote a spirit of forbearance, and to strengthen the hands of your officers, selected by yourselves and from among yourselves, in conducting peaceably and acceptably the affairs which concern us all, and have been lawfully transferred to their management and direction. Instead of upbraiding, let us counsel them if we deem their course erroneous, and let us pray to our Father in heaven, that He will endow them with his wisdom, that they may not alone be our heads in our temporal affairs, but be filled with a spirit of piety; that they may confer honour upon the stations which they hold by a course strictly in consonance with our blessed law; and that they may be enabled, assisted from a higher Source, so to govern our as yet small congregation, that all shall acquiesce in their rule, and many be brought hither to worship on the weekly Sabbath, on new-moons, holy days, and days of assembly, the Lord, our God, who erst dwelt on Zion, and who is the same now as He was when He revealed himself to our father Abraham on Mount Moriah, the spot consecrated unto everlasting as the dwelling of his adorable Name!

Brethren! but few hours more will elapse when another year will have ended, and be only remembered in the records of time. It is a mournful reflection, that the days that have passed will not return again, and that the moments that have fled, have fled for ever. Great is the mercy of God in giving us so many opportunities for repentance and a forsaking of sin; happy indeed would it be, were we fully alive to the gracious calls that are hourly addressed to us by the words of Scripture, by admonitions of friends, and by passing events which speak a language not to be misunderstood, that only the days that are spent in the pursuit of truth have not passed by in vain, that the hours alone dedicated to the worship of God and in deeds of mercy to his creatures are the treasures that are left to us from the quick, rapid flight of time.—Do you feel the importance of this wealth? are you alive to the worthlessness of every other thing besides? Then be frequent in your acts of goodness, and love the house of God, and prize the privilege that you are permitted to enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. As yet the sun is shining in heaven, the day is not yet closed; and if you are on the way of sin and corruption, the blessed light is still at hand to extricate you from the mazes of death and perdition. Heed then the grace which ordains for you seasons of repentance and days of forgiveness; and may the old year witness in its last expiring hour your abhorrence of iniquity, and may the new one open upon you with a firm resolve to be Israelites in name and in deeds, servants who know their Master, and who love to dwell in his house, and desire to chant hymns and prayers in his presence all the days of their life.

O God! who dwellest in the midst of Israel, who art everlasting and of infinite goodness and mercy, cause the approaching year to be full of blessing to all thy children, and let the spirit of truth and the forgiveness of mutual wrongs become rife among us; so that all causeless contention may be far, far from us, and peace be reigning within our walls, and tranquillity in our dwellings. And do Thou, Father above! forgive us our trespasses against thy will, and let our days pass along with the full assurance of thy favour, which sweetens sorrow, enhances pleasure, and renders easy the hour of death.—Bless, in the coming year, the earth with abundant increase, and send prosperity to the labour of our hands, that our striving may not be in vain, and that we may not need the assistance of one another, but receive our daily bread and decent raiment from thy bountiful hand alone, which is not galling in its bestowal of gifts, like the hand of flesh and blood, and is not wearied in giving, nor exhausted by its munificence. —Be also mindful of our captivity, and guard us from the assaults of the uncircumcised and alien; frustrate all evil counsel against us, and bless all who wish well to the outcast children of thy covenant. And when the appointed time has come, then send the redeemer in whose days shall be rebuilt thy sanctuary on Moriah, a structure of everlasting frame. Amen.

Elul 27th. } 5602.
Sept. 2d. }

DISCOURSE XIV.

DIVINE GRACE.

From everlasting to everlasting, Thou, O Lord! art God, and to Thee all the events of every age are known. If then our souls are laden with the weight of iniquity, there is no being who can save us from the grasp of thy indignation, neither can the length of time, in which our transgressions have passed by unheeded, obliterate them from thy memory. We are therefore conscious that to Thee only can we appeal for protection; for although Thou art a righteous Judge, Thou art also a compassionate Father, who willeth not the death of the sinner, but that he return from his evil way and live. O answer us therefore now, our Father! and when our deeds appeal loudly for condign visitation, if the magnitude of our backsliding invokes the outpouring of thy anger: then let thy mercy suppress our guilt, and pardon and forgive, as Thou hast done full often the children of the dust, whose intellect is circumscribed within the narrow bounds Thou hast set for its sphere, and whose days are numbered and hurrying on fast to the tomb, the house appointed for all the living. And show thus that, as we are sinful as were our fathers, thy goodness is yet powerful to save, and thy grace yet all-sufficient to redeem sinners, if only they return and seek thy favour in the manner it is ordained in the words of thy law, and the prophets whom Thou didst send to speak in thy name to thy people Israel. May this be thy will. Amen.

BRETHREN!

The period intervening between the New Year and the Day of Atonement which is fast approaching, is properly called the season of repentance, or the preparation requisite to usher in the great day of the Lord. This has given rise to the time-honoured custom of expatiating in a public lecture on the importance and mode of repentance, on the Sabbath which intervenes between the commencement of the year and the day of forgiveness of sin. The frequency of such appeals does not derogate from their importance and necessity, nor does the sameness of the subject weaken the force of the admonition; for in every year sins are committed, and hence men also require to be awakened to a knowledge of their misdeeds at every period of their existence. With this view, I propose to lay before you this day some reflections, calculated to arrest the attention, as a fit preparation for the time when, if we have repented, our sins will be forgiven.

Moses, the man of God, says in his prayer (Psalm cx., v. 3):

תשב אנוש עד דכא ותאמר שובו בני אדם :

תהל' צ' ג' :

"Thou bringest man to contrition, and saidst, Return, ye sons of man."

What is man in this world? and who is the One that watches over him? Man at his entrance into existence is weak in mind and powerless in body. In his progress he acquires comparative firmness of intellect and vigour of frame. And when he has reached the highest degree of development of spirit and matter, he decays gradually, imperceptibly, momentarily, till, should old age be his portion, he lingers for a space stripped of his exalted powers of soul and enfeebled in limbs at the verge of eternity, till gradually the vital spark flees away from a dwelling no longer fit for its habitation.—And God? He has been from the beginning, our thoughts run not back to a time when He was not; our first conceptions find Him perfect in strength, unending in wisdom, and as *our* powers weaken and decay we discover no symptoms of perishableness in *his* being, no diminution in *his* wisdom. And when we compare this, our own experience, with the records of days that have elapsed before we were born, we shall discover everywhere the same traces of providential power and wisdom which it has been our privilege to experience; for every page of history teaches this lesson, that there is an overruling Power who shapes the course of events, in a manner the most conducive to the general happiness of the mass of men, the chief objects of the Lord's care on earth; I say the chief objects of the Lord's care on earth, since the least reflecting must perceive at the first glance, that man has received dominion over the earth and the sea, and all their manifold inhabitants, in which dominion he is left uncontrolled, provided he abuses not the trust confided to his care.

This superabundant goodness of the Lord ought naturally to awaken our liveliest sense of gratitude, for benefits received and for mercies so often manifested. If one man thanks the other for gifts bestowed or for acts of kindness occasionally granted, whereas these gifts are but few and this kindness limited exceedingly in its scope and efficacy: how much more is it obligatory on us to return thanks to God for all that He has done for us; seeing that his gifts are innumerable, and his mercies constantly exercised without stint or measure. But how can we thank Him? how shall we return Him one of the many favours which He has lavishly heaped upon us? Can we serve Him again? can we do anything to increase his happiness? can we assist Him in his need? It is evident, however, to the dullest comprehension that by neither of the three modes, by which one man shows the sense of obligation he owes to another, can we in the least requite the smallest even of the favours which God has done for us; for He is not hungry that we could feed Him; He is never athirst that we could give Him drink; He is never oppressed by superior enemies that we could hurry to his rescue. And yet the debt of gratitude is due. Should a man serve me, even once in a year, I could not boldly step up to him as though we two were upon equal terms; I would be his debtor, and I should feel myself, if not humbled, at least subdued in his presence, and I should continue to be sensible of my indebtedness until an act of great unkindness on his part had counteracted his goodness, or till by deeds on my part I had proved that I am not unworthy of his kindness. And what at last is, generally speaking, human kindness? One parts with a thing which he needs not for his own use, or incurs a trouble which is easily encountered; and, again, even these acts of mercy are exhibited mostly towards our own friends and relatives, very rarely toward strangers, and most rarely towards those inimical to us. But how different is all this in the conduct of God to man! His deeds of mercy are not recurring once in the year merely; our memory needs not to be searched for marks of the favours which we receive from Him; but every moment of our life teems with motives of gratitude. Wherever we turn our eyes there will mercy stand revealed. Does the earth thirst for water, the wind, the breath of the Lord, drives up the vapour from the briny sea, and anon the clouds are bound unto the firmament in a hundred beautiful forms, in many a sight-ravishing shape, and soon the pattering rain comes down in sweet drops with refreshing coolness, and man breathes freer, his heart expands to the genial influence, and the beast lows gratified in the field, and the drooping herbage lifts up its sunken head, and as the sunbeams dart forth again, how do then a myriad of pellucid gems sparkle on every blade, on every leaf, in every blossom; and if the bride is beautiful when arrayed in her nuptial attire to the eyes of her husband, how much more splendidly is nature arrayed, when her Lord has decked her out with the thousands of jewels and glittering gems, which drop so beneficently and profusely out of his widely-extended hand! Who feels not that great is the Author whose works are so beautifully arranged, so admirably adapted to give delight and joy, whilst they lack nothing in usefulness and strength. And when his sun shines, when his rain descends, it is not alone for those who love Him, for those who are his friends, but for those also who will not believe in his existence, who shut their eyes, wilfully blind, against the countless evidences of his being and grace, who seek not his favour, nor dread his wrath.—How, then, shall we, who feel the weight of the obligation, fitly thank Him? can we stand boldly in his presence and say we have no motives of gratitude? shall we be ungrateful enough to forget that we are servants while he is Lord? that we are debtors while He is the Giver of all we have?—We must farther reflect that we cannot escape from his sight, and that wherever we are, be it in this state of existence or after death, we are still in his world and subject to his decree; and, consequently, if we are truly conscious of our relation to Him, we can never do otherwise than strive to prove ourselves grateful.

This gratitude, we have said, consists not in returning favours to God, because we can in nowise do Him any personal service. If now we had no revelation, our whole life would be spent in vain to discover the means of gratifying this sense of obligation, which every right-thinking man must feel. But we have a knowledge of God and his ways, not derived from our own unassisted reason, and this is embraced in the revelation of his august will which He has communicated to us. In this we are told, that serving God means to impress deeply on our minds his greatness and our dependence on his bounty; for so it is written: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence with a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." (Deut. v. 15.) Secondly, that the evidence of this impression is to be exhibited by a cheerful obedience to the ordinances which are contained in the revelation of his will. If I, then, wish to show my ardent appreciation of the Lord's mercy, two things are necessary: the one, that I omit no opportunity of making myself thoroughly acquainted with whatever He has taught us, and the other that, when I have learned, I omit no occasion whatever to obey cheerfully what I have been shown to be the will of God.

Now, any one not acquainted with human nature would suppose that all which they, who give instruction in the word of God, would have to do to summon all mankind to his service, would be that they honestly tell all their hearers, "So has God spoken," in order to insure a cheerful, a ready, an unwavering obedience. One would say, that so great is the dependence of man on God in every stage of his being, that it would be impossible for him to deviate from the right path in the merest trifle even. But any one who thinks so highly of human nature will surely find himself sadly disappointed; man is given to sin, and not to obedience, and consequently the teacher of religion has to watch closely the progress of events in his pupils, and the religious parent the development of his children's character, to assist by constant admonition the effect of doctrinal teaching which they have impressed upon their charges. But even this care, no matter how honestly exerted, no matter during how long a time, will not prevent a deviation from the path of rectitude; for rebellion against his Benefactor too often characterizes the life of the child of clay. In infancy already he is restive under the little restraints, which his parents are compelled to impose upon him for the preservation of his life and health; and when he begins to drink in the waters of knowledge, how little pleasure does he manifest in the acquisition of that which will render his after-life pleasant and useful; for knowledge is distasteful to him, and partially by force, partially by bribes, partially by the stimulus of hateful ambition, he is brought to con his daily lesson, which his unwillingness makes an odious task; nay, often all these means even fail of awakening in him a love of learning, and the precious years of youth and vigorous intellect pass away in idleness and play, and the young man enters upon the active stage of life with passions unregulated, and the mind left unstored of useful knowledge. Yet even under the most favourable circumstances our maturer years are full of temptation. Ah, how the world smiles upon us! how gay the outside of vice appears! Look at her trappings, her gaudy colours, her tinsel ornaments, her presumptuous look, her enticing mien, her mask, her feigned smile which hides the hideous visage; and how our heart flutters to follow her footsteps, to advance whither she beckons! Ah! how fearful is the stake! We hesitate, perhaps, at first; but soon we venture one step; we heed not the weeping voice of virtue, which in her unadorned loveliness calls after us to beware: yes, the first step is taken; we feel intoxicated with the delicious draught, drugged by the poison which our senses have cast into the cup of life, and we reel on,—on,—on, and we see not that the tempter is no longer on the smooth lawn where we first beheld her; she flits along with a lurid glare, like a false light, attached to her flowing garb; yet we fancy it is the steady lamp of truth we are pursuing; we wade through deep waters in the wake of our destroyer; she mocks us with deceitful hope, that soon our feet will be again on dry land, and our limbs stretched out on the couch of pleasure; yet we ween that her voice is soothing, and her advice the dictate of heavenly reason; but soon—sooner than even our enemies dared to hope for our destruction, the waters rise tumultuously above our heads, and the fiend laughs at our folly, at our infatuation, that we called darkness light, and bitterness sweet; and we would sink into the abyss forever, were not the merciful One at hand, to snatch us in the last extremity, when involuntarily we invoke his Name for protection, from the destroyer's grasp, even as a brand is snatched from the fire. They, perhaps, who have never been tempted, may in the pride of self-righteousness exclaim against the folly of sinners, and believe in their own hearts that they never would have fallen. Especially will the rich, the endowed with mental greatness, they who are exempt from labour, and consequently from many a temptation to which the poor, the ignorant, and they who have to battle with an unfriendly world for their daily bread, exult in their pride over their fallen fellows, who sunk because circumstances tempted them to transgress. But let them beware; they, too, are human, and crimes to which the poor are not liable ensnare their footsteps at every stage of life. And when they yield to the power of sin, how hideously does their misconduct look, how does it shock our sensibility! And have we never seen the once temperate man become besotted by intemperance? has not many a daughter of affluence herded with the lowest outcasts of her sex? have not sons of the great confederated with the robbers in the woods, and with those who covertly plunder the unsuspecting at the accursed gaming-table? have not children of the virtuous called the blush of shame upon their parents' cheeks by their crimes and deeds of violence? have not the offspring of the great and powerful, through their follies, been a loathing to those who would have been honoured by the appointment as keepers to their fathers' dogs? and, lastly, have we not witnessed many, who have once led a godly life, by degrees forgetting their own instruction, and, joined with the infidel and ungodly, despising their Creator, and neglecting his law? It is true, that vice when calmly viewed, and irreligion when her deceitful mask is removed, are both hateful and disgusting in their nature and outward proportions. But when passions speak loudly within our heart, when self-indulgence claims to be gratified, when cupidity seeks to amass large hoards of wealth, when interest whispers that gain and ambition are to be prized above everything else on earth: how quickly is the evil invested with the beauty of light and goodness, we cease to regard with horror what we have once tasted and found delightful; and hence the commencement once made, immorality and irreligion, of whatever kind they may be, may boast of possessing among their votaries men of whom the world had a just right to expect a different course.

Were it therefore that we had received no aid for amendment in addition to the plain dictates of the law, how many souls would be eternally lost to the fold of the Lord; for if the soul that sinneth were to die as soon as the sin had been committed, nay, grant that this should be for heinous offences only: we might with truth say, that few would see the light of salvation. But God did not leave us so unprovided, and herein is his mercy doubly displayed. He included in his law incentives to repentance. He taught us that, however we may have departed from the path of truth, there is hope for us, if we will but return from our evil and seek a renewal of his grace. He has also appointed in his law ordinances which, if even at first sight unmeaning to the superficial thinker, are, by their very strangeness, calculated to excite inquiry; and upon inquiry for the reason of all and each, we shall be answered, That they are for the sake of arousing us to a sense of our sinfulness, in order that we may investigate our deeds and remodel our conduct in conformity with the commands of the Lord. And so also when we hear the Shophar on the beginning of the year, we should heed it as the call to repentance, to awaken our dormant energies with this assurance that, though we deem ourselves secure in our iniquity, there is a Guardian above who heeds our every act, and that an Avenger is ready to execute the judgment which we have drawn down upon ourselves. Then is the Day of Atonement! an entire day are we to fast, an entire day are we to dwell in the house of God; not to gratify Him, who only delights in mercy, with our bodily affliction, but to prove to ourselves that we are conscious of our errors, and seek even at the hazard of bodily pain to conquer our bodily desires, and thus demonstrate that we abhor sin and its chief incentives, which are the strivings after carnal desires and worldly acquisitions. Then comes the Feast of Tabernacles. Then is the temporary abode in booths to represent, that we can place ourselves at the command of God into frail abodes, there to celebrate his mercy which He has ever extended to Israel in particular, and to every other family of man in general; and then at last the other ceremonies attending this festival are to impress on us that we are to devote ourselves, even in small things, entirely to the guidance of his holy will, and to accept as truth whatever He has prescribed for us in his law.

But if neither instruction nor warning will restrain nor cure us from sin, if the obduracy of our heart will not heed the voice which speaks in mercy: then has the Lord the terrors of his wrath by which He can terrify and scathe those who will not listen. Believe not, beloved brethren! that any event which happens to you and the world is without its meaning.

If a thunderbolt shivers a tree in your presence; or if a ship sinks under your feet, and you escape unhurt; if a fit of sickness brings you to the edge of the tomb, and yet you recover; if your wealth is taken from you, and you are deprived of what you valued so highly: in every case be assured that your conduct has been weighed in the just balance of truth, and that you are declared wanting in godliness; and that it behoves you to retrieve the lost favour by an altered course of life. The very imminence of the danger or the positive affliction must prove to you, that you have clung to earthly things with a fondness which was displeasing to God; and that you can only regain favour by seeking for light in the pages of revelation, and an unwavering adherence to whatever duties are there recorded. An abhorrence, however, of the evil will not be sufficient; you must do more,—you must avoid it, and not think, as many unwise ones think, that they are not able to overcome inveterate habits. The struggle may indeed be very severe, but amendment is nevertheless practicable; and if you are sincerely desirous of amending, you will ultimately succeed, provided you avoid the error of self-reliance, and lean for support in your renewed zeal upon Him who has shown unto you his mercy and power.

Nor must you be faint-hearted, for fear of your being condemned by your transgressions. True, sin unrepented opens the portals of perdition; but far different is it when repentance has reconciled us to our heavenly Father, who says through his prophet, "Return ye and live." Return, therefore, O house of Israel! to the Lord whom you have estranged by your iniquity, only come to Him who can sprinkle the waters of cleanliness upon you, in order that you may be purified through his mercy, which is never wanting to those who seek Him in truth and humility.

This now is the way of God to man. He teaches us his paths, He bestows his goodness upon us, and when we sin, He corrects us as a father who wishes to improve his son; and when we have even sunk deeply into the slough where the wicked lie who forget the Lord, his hand is stretched forth to save and to redeem. O let nothing then withhold us from repentance; we incur additional guilt, if we doubt the gracious promises of which the Scriptures are so full, which are so consoling to the wounded spirit, when it lays open its affliction to the One who heareth prayer. Happy, therefore, are we, if we always persevere on the path of truth, and transgress not in any of our doings; but also happy shall we be, if we betimes discover our error when we have gone astray, and heeding the warning which timely punishment addresses to us, we return unto the way of righteousness and salvation which is discoverable in the word of God. Nor need the sinner fear that he will be less in the kingdom of Heaven; true he has done grievous wrong, he has been ungrateful and rebellious; but it is not his right to set limits to the grace of our God, who is long-suffering, and abundant in forgiveness. In fine, let us all be mindful that it is in our power to merit the grace which is extended to sinners if they will but claim it; and that there is hope if even repentance be late accomplished; and let us reflect farther, that punishment is not an evidence of rejection, but an exhortation to amendment; for God leads us to contrition, and then says, "Return, ye children of man." In this hope let us pass the coming Day of Atonement; and let us trust that among the thousands of Israel, many may be led to repentance, and obtain forgiveness, in order that the salvation of the Lord may extend wider and wider, and his fear be constantly deeper impressed on the hearts of all the seed of Abraham, his servant.

O God! who hast spoken the good through so many messengers of truth, fulfil, we beseech Thee, thy promise, and send thy spirit unto us to purify us of our iniquities; and when our sins demand the punishment meet for our ingratitude, then let thy mercy prevail, inasmuch as we are but flesh, and our inclination is prone to evil. And let us be brought to discover the erroneousness of our deeds, that our heart may be filled with humble resignation in whatever visitation may be sent to us; so that we may learn to adore Thee in affliction, if prosperity should have inspired us with a vain reliance upon our own reason and strength. But above all, preserve us before Thee, that we may live and merit, through a sincere repentance, thy grace, whilst yet it is time to return, and cast us not off in our sins. So that, living in the spirit of truth, and as new-born children of grace, we may devote the remainder of our days to thy service, and proclaim to many the wonders Thou hast wrought in our behalf, and that many may be brought, through our instruction, to bow at the foot of thy throne as accepted servants and true worshippers. Amen.

Tishry 5th. } 5603.
Sept. 9th. }

DISCOURSE XV.

THE WATERS OF NOAH.

Let the soul of all living praise the Lord, and acknowledge his glorious kingdom; and let every breath extol the King who is mighty, fearful, and good, and who alone is Saviour, Redeemer, God! Amen.

Brethren!

In the section of the law which we have read this day occurs the following promise:

עד כל ימי הארץ זרע וקציר וקר וחם וקיץ וחרף
ויום ולילה לא ישבתו : ברא' ח' כב' :

"While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Genesis viii. 22.

In referring to the time when this assurance came from the mighty Creator, we will discover that it was when a fearfully sinning race had just been annihilated by the awful visitation of Providence, of which the traces are remaining over the whole globe at this very hour. In his omnipotence God had created the earth and all the manifold inhabitants that have life and being on its surface. But no sooner had the noblest and wisest of his creation escaped, so to say, from his creative hand, than he was induced by pride and curiosity to violate the only command of the Lord which he had received. Before this transgression the power to sin was merely implanted in man, but had not yet developed itself in practice; consequently, he was in a state of purity; for the commission of sin alone defiles, not the ability of being sinful. But with the first act which contravened the will of God, the floodgates of evil were opened; and the worst consequence of the fall of Adam was that henceforward rebellion against the Lord was the prevailing course of conduct, by which his descendants were distinguished. The eating of the forbidden fruit by the father was, before long, succeeded by the murder of his second son through the hand of his eldest brother; and every succeeding age yet more and more placed at a distance from themselves the duty which they owed to their Lord and God. It was not unbelief which is recorded against them as the cause of divine displeasure, but daring acts of wickedness and violence, which at last prompted the Judge of all flesh to destroy the man whom He had made from the face of all the earth; and, as by this destruction the appointed ruler of creatures was to be removed, the inferior animals likewise were doomed to destruction. It is not to be doubted that the men of sin then living on earth fancied themselves placed beyond the reach of retribution, just as they do who in our own days disregard the law, preferring to follow the bent of their inclinations. And should one who really felt the force of religion actually have reproved them, he would probably have been called an enthusiast, a dreamer, one not conversant with the world and with the many and various ways of enjoying whatever is presented to us; and his advice would therefore have remained unheeded. Yet the imaginary security was no barrier against the coming storm; for the Lord had determined to blot out the race of the offenders; and though every child of man is ultimately destined to depart from this life, He caused the decree of death to reach all mankind in a sudden and frightful manner; and the earth opened her fountains, and the sky poured down incessant floods for forty days, until the entire face of nature was covered with one uniform dreary waste of waters. How dreadful must have been the catastrophe! But few looked forward with apprehension to the period which the mercy of God had set as the time for repentance, by which the threatened evil might have been averted; and these few alone were provided with means of escape from the general ruin. But all others, by degrees, saw the soil beneath their feet more and more giving way to the rush of waters, which issued forth from thousands of hidden springs; and whithersoever they fled, there were the same torrents flooding down from the skies; the same heaving of billows at their heels. When an eminence had been reached, and they vainly thought that there they were safe, the new-made ocean came rushing up to them, and no refuge was unto them but in the arms of death. Fathers saw their household, one by one, sink to rise no more; daughters appealed to their mothers who themselves were unable to help; and barely was the cry of anguish rung from the lover at seeing his bride snatched by some curling wave from his feverish grasp, when he too was lost beneath the billows forever. But what needs it to dwell longer on the horrors of those days? Painters and poets have essayed to pourtray what they conceived them to be, and how man and beast strove with one another to reach some place of safety, which in itself was soon to be so no longer; but all that we can conceive of the scene now must be far short of the dreadful reality of that great desolation, which the Providence of God sent upon earth to sweep off a sinning generation, who had made the world hideous by their crimes.

Yet, as our God does never punish but with a view to amend thereby those who are witnesses of his power, He left also, in the present instance, some few to profit by the warning effected by the destruction of the transgressors; and Noah, therefore, the man who had been found righteous in his generation, and who had accordingly met with the favour of the Lord, was saved in the ark which he had built by the decree of the Supreme Wisdom, together with his whole household, as we read in the record which has been transmitted down to our time; and in order to insure a continuance of the other living things which were on the earth, at least one pair of each kind was likewise taken in the ark to again propagate its species, after the punishment should have abated of its violence. We will not to-day enlarge upon the circumstances attending the deluge, though the whole of them are well calculated to awaken in the thinking mind reflections deep and profound, over the tremendous majesty and power of God. We will merely advert to the promise of everlasting Truth which is recorded as given immediately after the subsiding of the waters had permitted the new progenitor of the human race to quit his place of refuge. You must not suppose, brethren, that the sacrifice of Noah reminded God of a fact which He had not noticed before, that all men are sinful by nature; for He who made us knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. But the Bible always speaks of the doings of God in the language of man; for this is the only method by which ideas can be at all conveyed to finite beings like ourselves. It then happened that Noah, after his wonderful deliverance from the general destruction, felt himself called upon to signalize his first act by gratitude to his Deliverer; he therefore took some of the beings preserved for his service and the service of his children, to consecrate them upon the altar of God. It was not therefore the mere slaying of the victims, but, just as in the case of the first offerer, Abel, the sincerity of the devotion which made the sacrifice acceptable. The smoke of the burnt-offering therefore ascended on high, and was received as an agreeable savour in the most holy Presence, and the offerer was blest for the sake of the perfection of his faith, which induced him to refer his deliverance to the Source of all salvation, and to look to Him alone for farther aid and protection. It was accordingly proved, not to the Lord, for He knew it beforehand, but to man himself, that he could serve his Maker though alone among thousands who desire not to hallow themselves by truth and obedience; and that, therefore, though many may draw upon themselves guilt and its concomitant punishment, some few there will always be who, deserving divine favour, will be signally exempted from the evil which strikes down all around them. Let us farther reflect, that by the universality of the flood, of which the traces can be discovered in the highest mountains, man had learnt a lesson that no monument of his power, no contrivance of his skill and industry can stand for one moment, when the foundations of his structure are sapped by the tooth of sin, when his handiwork has not and deserves not the blessing of Heaven. As far, therefore, as all mankind are concerned, the warning was complete, not alone for that generation, but for all future ages. We therefore find that the virtue of Noah caused his memorial to come before our Father in heaven, and He blessed him with his grace and favour, and promised that in no future age should a universal flood destroy all living, though all men should be sinners; but that He would temper justice with mercy, and preserve and shield, whilst the destroyer should be sent on his mission to compel the transgressors to bow before the Eternal's awful throne.—And when now the proud throw off the yoke of religion and wish not to humble themselves as servants before their Master: they may be reminded that their greatness exists only at the will and sufferance of God, and that He, who took vengeance on the generation, which lived at the flood, is yet able to single out every sinner and mete out to him the recompense due for his misdeeds, though millions of slaves crouch at the foot of his throne, and nations tremble at the mention of his name.

Were it indeed that the promise, that no deluge should henceforth destroy the earth, would set limits to the power of God to humble and to punish transgressors, or that it should hold out hopes of impunity to the sinners: then would it argue a vacillation in the will of God, incompatible with the attributes which we have learned of his being. But the original purpose of God in creating man was to render him great and glorious, and to constitute him a being but little less than angels. When therefore it became necessary to punish, it would have betrayed a disappointment with the result of his creation, had the Lord been compelled to either blot out the whole race of man, or to give them a new mental organization. But at the beginning of creation He had looked over all He had made, and found it very good, including even the inclination to sin, which He had implanted in man. It was therefore perfectly consistent with his wisdom and mercy that, the punishment once indelibly impressed upon his children, He should in future deal with them more in their individual than in their aggregate capacity; and hence was the promise given, that as long as the earth stands, whilst yet the creation, as we see it, has not accomplished the end of its institution, the regular course of seasons should not be interrupted, but seed-time and harvest should annually succeed each other, and the alternation of summer and winter, spring and autumn, should be as permanent as the changes which occur diurnally, and which bid the sun to disappear from our horizon, and call forth the silvery moon and the glittering stars to cover with their sweet light the nocturnal heavens.

This promise of the Lord has stood the safeguard of the world for thousands of years, and the course of nature as by Him organized has not abated of its original regularity and force in the least from the moment all was finished, even unto this very hour.

And when sin prevailed to a great extent, severe visitations have from time to time passed over the earth; but no deluge has ever again ravaged it to sweep off all the living as it happened at the flood. And whenever soon after the rising of the sun or near his setting masses of dark clouds are piled up opposite to him in the firmament, and rain-drops descend unto the earth, the gorgeous arch of promise overspans the west or the east, and the pious are called upon to adore the Most High who "remembers the covenant, is true in his covenant, and faithful in his word." And, as it fades from the sight in the brighter light of day, or in the increasing gloom of evening, true thankfulness swells every heart that feels, that God is the Ruler, and that in Him he lives, and that his truth preserves all, and that it is because of his goodness that He destroys not the sinners, but gives them time to repent and regain by their own deeds and faith the happiness for which they were created, and from which sin and iniquity will banish those who defile themselves by their means, forgetful that they are servants to One who reigns unto everlasting.

In the same manner, now, as man was made the crown of God's works on earth, and became in various ways the object of promises, enduring as is the earth itself: the Israelites were chosen from the rest of Adam's progeny to be the witnesses in the world, and a living monument, that "the Lord is the God;" and with their existence, too, are therefore connected covenant and promises, to endure while nature is undestroyed. At the creation of man, it is said: "And God said, We will now make man in our image, in our likeness," to indicate that the production of this particular being was of more importance in the scale of existing things than any other of those which had preceded him; and we have said already that man, though he afterwards fell greatly in the general depravity of the times, yet did not lose in all his branches the true image of God; inasmuch as when all the rest were found deserving of destruction, there was one whom God called righteous in his generation, and saved him and his house from the general wreck, to propagate again the human species: thus proving that man's nature was yet the perfection of all things, else Noah, too, would have been destroyed, and a new race of animated beings differing materially from Adam would have been formed. In nearly the same manner does God at a later period announce his selection of Israel, in the following words (Exodus iii. 7, 8): "I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good and an ample land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Here, too, is a circumspection of the highest kind indicated, as though the Ever-blessed One needed to come down upon earth from the residence of his glory to accomplish an object dear and important to Him, again using the language of man to picture unto the weak mind of mortals the grandeur of the event which would require so great a care on the part of Omnipotence. We all know the reason of this divine descent; for, when the liberation was accomplished, the religion of Heaven was proclaimed before the chosen people, and was indelibly and permanently impressed on their hearts. But we too, like the men before the flood, would not remain devoted to God, and we desired to throw off our peculiar allegiance to the great King, eager to be like the gentiles to worship wood and stone, and to bow down before the works of our hands; and like the early inhabitants of the earth, too, we have been visited with a punishment almost equal to annihilation, since our state has been abolished, and we have been left few from many. Nevertheless to us also was a promise given, similar to the one announced after the flood, and it is in these words:

כי מי נח זאת לי אשר נשבעתי מעבר מי נח עוד
על הארץ כן נשבעתי מקצף עליך ומגער בך :
ישע' נד' ט' :

"For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more pass over the earth: so have I sworn, that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Isaiah liv. 9.

As it was the Lord's intention not to destroy man after appointing him the ruler of his works: so had He resolved from the beginning not to annihilate Israel, after He had constituted them the guardians of his law. And as He swore immediately after the flood that such an event should never again occur, so have we, in the parallel promise just cited, an assurance that, when the barren daughter of Zion shall be permitted to sing over the mighty redemption which shall bid her rejoice, the anger of the Lord would never more be kindled against her numerous offspring, which then shall fill the land. We have seen how truly and faithfully has remained accomplished from age to age the covenant, of which the glowing rainbow is the visible sign in heaven: and shall we doubt the fulfilment of the other hope, which is so gloriously shadowed forth in every event which has happened to our people? Other nations have sinned, and barbarians came and subverted their mighty empires, and with such fury has the besom of destruction swept over them and their lands, that in vain the inquirer asks after the remnants of these nations! It appears as though the earth had opened and swallowed up temples and towers, palaces and gardens, walls and cities, for of many people the very spot they inhabited is uncertain, and others have not even left their names in the memory of their successors. But when Jacob's sons sinned, their land was in very truth trodden down by the legions of many nations, and their proud walls and fortified places were trampled into dust by the heavy tread of the armed millions that invaded the fields of Palestine. Whatever was destructible in the vales of Moriah, in the desert of Judah, at the sea of Galilee, in the coasts of Zebulun or the Mount of Ephraim, was entirely given up to the fury of the fire that burned in all our boundaries. Sulphur and salt have in very truth desolated the land, and in many formerly fertile regions the thistle now waves its briery head, or the sharp thorn wounds the hand of the traveller; from the city of palms the trees whence its name is derived have almost disappeared, and desolation sits triumphant over the broken aqueducts and ruined towers. But has Israel been destroyed? Say, are there none of Jacob's sons on earth? Speak, do you know of none who call on the name of Abraham's God? Yes, yes! there are many, many such who cling to the glorious law which their fathers received at Horeb, who bless their God daily that He has been pleased to place their souls in bodies, who in the flesh claim an alliance with the faithful of ancient days, and who will ever prefer ignominy from man, sooner than forsake the standard of holiness which Moses elevated in the wilderness of Arabia. And shall these devoted men be told that their hopes are vain? that their expectations are not well founded? No, brethren! if there is truth in God, and it is blasphemy almost to use these words, there is an imperishable covenant made with us, that will not be broken whilst heaven and earth endure. Nay, mountains may be shaken, and hills be moved; but the kindness of the Lord will not depart, nor will his covenant of peace be removed from us; but unto all times will He be our Protector, as He has been from times of old.

There may be many, however, who are not fully sensible of the great good which they have received, nor have faith in the mercies which in his own good time the Lord intends extending to his people. Such as these will profess to disbelieve the truth of the covenant, or fancy that they see it accomplished in the history of the gentiles, who claim now to be the spiritual Israel, under the averment that the literal Israel have been rejected from grace by means of their rebellion. To those who will not abide the Lord's coming, whose heart yearns after the flesh-pots of Egypt and Edom, that is the worldly advantages which the strangers unto Israel's God can confer upon their associates, we have only to say, that the Lord stands in no need of such unwilling servants as they are, and that, though we must always see with pain when any one falls off from our communion, the unity of our nation is benefitted, if the false-hearted have no longer a share in our household. But let them beware how they listen to the counsel which their passions or worldly interests give unto them: they may renounce outwardly their share in our people; but they nowise escape thereby the cognizance of the Lord, and they and their children may receive such retribution, as will mark them in this life and the life to come as rebels against the majesty of Heaven.

To the gentiles, however, who fancy to see in our dispersion an argument for the truth of their belief, who imagine themselves the successors to our spiritual selection, we will say that the prophet compares the happiness of Israel to the waters of Noah. Let us then ask, "Who suffered in this calamity?" Evidently the descendants of Adam, because they had sinned; "who escaped?" a small remnant of the same family, who again peopled the earth after the subsidence of the flood. Now to the parallel: "Who sinned against the law of Moses?" the sons of Israel; "Who were banished, in consequence of this, from Palestine?" the same people. "What nation was told that its people should be slaughtered by thousands, and their land laid waste for a forgetfulness of the Divine law?" again the sons of Jacob. "Who were promised that though but few should be left, still they should not be entirely cast off?" the same portion of mankind. This being clearly established, it is but reasonable that when the prophet speaks in one part of the book of punishment for certain acts committed by a certain people, he refers to the same when he, in another part, speaks of good things that are to happen to them. Besides, in the very chapter of Isaiah of which we are now speaking, is mentioned the shame of the widowhood of the people which is to be blessed. Where can the gentile church claim to have suffered such a shame? for, according to all their assumptions, the very commencement of their system was the consummation of all the glory predicted by the prophets. Whereas, if we apply this, as we do the punishments threatened elsewhere, to ourselves, it is perfectly agreeable both to history and the context; for now Zion is as though forsaken by her husband, she is in a state akin to widowhood, and amply does she meet with contumely and shame; because He, who has sworn to protect her, is by many supposed to have chosen himself another bride. But all this is but a state of probation, to see who are the true and faithful, who are they who will love and trust on through all trials and dangers, and who are those who fear of following Him through the labyrinth of sorrow whither their God precedes them. Indeed, darkness often seems to rest on our path; but if we will look attentively, there is always a bright star fixed in the heaven of our hopes which will lead us securely, pleasantly, calmly to the haven of our destiny; and, as in every age which has preceded our own, we shall have ample cause to rejoice that we are called by the name of Israel, though this name expose us at times to the scorn and hatred of the world.

The flood of Noah has never more been renewed, there the promise of the Lord has remained firm and unshaken; and as annihilation has never yet overwhelmed the actual bodily Israel, we may likewise say that the promise made unto Abraham has been fulfilled to the very letter. Whenever we look heavenward and behold the arch of light spanning the dark clouds before us, we must feel that great and true is the Lord who keeps his covenant to a sinning world, and lets the transgressors even live, though they have often neglected his will. So, also, when we open our eyes to the blessing of the heavenly religion which is in our possession, when we reflect that by its means we have in very truth been chosen from all nations, and been elevated above error, to call upon the One who is God alone, and to worship none else: O then must every thinking Israelite be conscious that this is a sign of the covenant, more brilliant than the play of light which the sun reflects in his rising, or when he sets in the golden west, a sign of the covenant which endures during the darkness of the night no less than in the light of day.—In this light, beloved brethren! let us walk; and may it guide us with the blessing of Heaven through the tribulations of life, through the shadows which surround us in our captivity, and place us securely in the presence of our almighty Father, when He demands back our spirit, when our task is done.

May the words of our mouth, O our God! be accepted by Thee as an agreeable savour; and send Thou thy spirit to bless us in all our assemblies where we meet to worship thy holy Name; and impress deeply into our minds the elevated blessing which is ours to be the children of thy covenant; so that we may be enabled to proclaim fearlessly our abiding hope in thy salvation and the truth of thy promises, and remain steadfast in the profession of that faith which acknowledges none like Thee on earth, and which hopes for no Saviour in heaven beside Thee, O God of truth and love! Amen.

Heshvan 3d. } 5603.
October 7th. }

DISCOURSE XVI.

RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.

Thou! who art great in power and wise in counsel, be with us in every stage of our existence. Be our guide in infancy, our stay in our maturer years, and our prop in the decline of life. Give wisdom to our souls, and cause us to understand fully the duties of our appointment on earth, and favour us with persuasive power, that we may point out to others the way of righteousness which leads unto salvation. Reveal thyself, O our Father! in this manner to every son of Israel, that all of our brethren may be firm in their devotion to thy will, and avoid following the customs of the gentiles which militate against the decrees of thy law of truth, and which lead to paths of sinfulness which Thou abhorrest. Let it be thy will thus to preserve the seed of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob as a people dear unto Thee, for the sake of the covenant which Thou didst swear unto their fathers. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Were it that the people of Israel should be at the pinnacle of political power at the present day, and that the earth were full of the fame of their deeds of arms and glorious achievements in the field of political sciences: then, indeed, would it require few incentives to urge our brothers in faith to be sincere in upholding a system, which of itself would, in that case, be the sphere in which all their worldly greatness must, of necessity, find its source, and whence it would draw its means of support and increase. Suppose, for instance, that the law of the state recognized the seventh day as truly dedicated to rest and prayer; that nearly all the inhabitants of the land refrained from work on this day in obedience to the civil enactments of the delegated authorities to which all are compelled to yield obedience, under pain of civil punishments: it would necessarily result that the few, who of their own accord might not be willing to obey the law of resting on the seventh, would be induced either by the force of example and association, or from fear of punishment, or from the dread of public odium, to rest with the majority on the general day of abstinence from labour, and resort to the places of general meeting, where the multitudes of their countrymen might congregate for purposes of mutual instruction and prayer. In this acquiescence there need, moreover, be no trace of hypocrisy or self-deception; for where conviction is not very strong, either for or against a certain system, man is for the most part an imitative creature, and not unlike certain inferior animals, that in their physical capacity take their colour from surrounding objects, he will in his moral character reflect the peculiar features of human beings like himself, in the reach of whose influence he happens to be placed. We are thus often tempted to accuse each other of inconsistency, for professing at one time of our life opinions, which we combatted at an earlier period. In itself, this in truth argues an inconsistency; but it does not follow that we are to be blamed for exhibiting it. It may be that, when we made our first profession of opinions, we were under a different influence from what we are now; our own mind had been trained and tinctured by the contact with peculiar persons of a certain and determined mode of thinking, and in giving expression to what we deemed our *own* thoughts, we but uttered unknowingly the imbibed thoughts which we had derived from others. Now as times progress, we had perhaps quitted our first associates and were transplanted, to use a simile borrowed from the vegetable world, from one species of soil to another. No doubt, during the first few months, the new soil did not harmonize with our mental well-being, we felt the strange influence as detrimental to our healthy development; but our nature soon accommodated itself, though slowly and by degrees, to the new powers which were brought to act on it, and as the soil has in many plants a material effect upon the colour of flowers, and leaves, and fruits, so were we transferred, by extraneous influence, into the new field of thought which we now profess to have learned to cultivate from our own unassisted and more matured state of reasoning. There is, accordingly, on the one hand, no great cause for others to complain of our inconsistency; nor is there on the other, any room for our exultation over the greater extent of our mental development; seeing that our own unaided research had but little to do in producing the new development of mind of which we boast, and which our former friends condemn. Indeed, were opinions of every sort stationary, were it a disgrace to express a change of sentiment on any subject whatever, there could be no progress in society at large, and but little hope for the future prevalence of better ideas in individuals; since the multitude at large originate but a small number of new ideas; these are the productions of the master-spirits, who in every age, more or less, rule the world by their precept and example. And hence, communities or societies are not guilty of blamable inconsistency if they occasionally change, though the new views are not their own invention; and as little need the individual blush if new associations, by degrees, make it evident to him that his former views were contracted, and based perhaps upon the errors of ages, and conceived by him to be sound and reasonable solely, because he had never heard them attacked by his early friends, and always found them in the ascendant among the greater part of those who surrounded him.

If now the multitude are in the habit of paying respect to certain laws, and assume that one of the community does not deem them of paramount importance, provided he has never been *convinced* of their wrongfulness: he acts simply in consonance with human nature, if he follows the example of those around him, in showing outwardly due deference to the observance of his associates. Again, if opinions are constantly broached without contradiction, if assumptions are made for any system or theory unchecked because of the overshadowing influence of those who profess them: no one who has not been taught to believe or acquiesce in contrary views ought to be deemed insincere or hypocritical for professing similar ideas, no matter what you or I may think of their soundness and truth. You must observe that the human mind is not of that uniform character in every person as the mere bodily functions, such as sight, taste, and hearing; for there are a thousand, nay millions, of disturbing causes which constantly influence the soul in every stage of existence, and sway it nearly as the currents of air continually agitate the surface of seas, lakes, and rivers. But even in physical things, I mean purely animal functions, sight, taste, and hearing, accidental or constitutional disturbing causes greatly modify their development in different or even the same individuals. If for instance you live in a country where art has yet to struggle for its existence with the rude powers of undirected nature, the vision is greatly more sharpened than it is in civilized countries, where the resources of art furnish appliances for the production of artificial light and the assistance of diseased eyes. The roving savage will distinguish objects during the day at a far greater distance than you can imagine; and at night a simple rude torch, consisting of some resinous wood, will suffice to enable him to follow the few pursuits for which he needs the aid of artificial illumination. Whereas, as civilization advances, and you have the appliances for procuring an abundance of light, the inventive faculty is constantly racked to discover and to bring into use new and more powerful contrivances to see at a distance in daytime, and to dispel, as far as art can do it, the gloom of night. With taste something similar can be discovered; education and habit render palatable things which no one would lay hold of for the purpose of converting them into food if left to his own fancy; and other substances again, perfectly nauseous to some persons, become absolute dainties to others differently trained.—With the sense of hearing precisely the same peculiarity will present itself; it is education alone which habituates the ear to certain combinations of sound, so as to produce agreeable or disagreeable sensations; the highly cultivated European will accordingly consider as insufferable the clanging noises which the savage African or untutored Asiatic dignifies with the name of music; and then again it requires a great knowledge of musical combinations to render those highly-wrought productions, with which great performers occasionally astonish us, pleasing to a general audience, who might all be enchanted with a simple ballad or plaintive melody.—So also they, who are from circumstances compelled to watch for many hours in lonely places, become at length so alive to impressions of sound that their ear can perceive the approach of footsteps, or the like, much sooner and with far greater certainty than the unpractised can have any idea of.

We see thus that if we view man as a mere animal even, a number of diversities will be observable in different individuals, apparently all alike endowed with healthy and vigorous bodily organs; and the wonder at this diversity will cease, if we take but very little trouble to investigate the training which they have undergone, be this the effect of necessity, of chance, or of choice. The facts connected herewith are so generally known, and are so abundant in every one's experience, that it is needless for our present purpose to enlarge any more on the subject, or to adduce examples which are familiar to every one. And, as we have stated already, the same phenomenon is observable if we regard man in a higher light, that of an intelligent and accountable being. When first he is born, it is doubtful whether he is at once conscious of the ideas which are, so to say, represented around him in the words and actions by those who have the custody of his earliest days. But this state of entire thoughtlessness soon ceases, and it is surprising how early, with intelligent children, the development of ideas commences. It is left to every one of you to call to mind some exhibition of infantile intellect, which has fallen under his observation. We may say with perfect truth, that before the child is a year old the formation of opinions commences. Now observe, ideas like language, are insensibly imbibed from those around us. Present the child with an object and call it *apple*, he will after a few trials, provided he can utter this simple word, designate the like thing whenever he sees it with the same appellation. So too with the idea that this object can be used as food; and if he once finds his taste gratified by its enjoyment, he will in future endeavour to renew this pleasure, whenever an apple is within his reach. Everything tends to make similar impressions, and this constantly, upon the infant mind; and words spoken inadvertently perhaps by older persons, habitual expressions which thoughtlessly fall from them, sink deeply into the tender spirit, to take root perchance never to be eradicated. It is not necessary to remind you how superstitious terrors, with which foolish parents not rarely endeavour to frighten children into obedience, are left indelibly engraven upon the tablets of memory, and mark the whole character of after-life. Yet if you extend your inquiry, you will at once see that these are not the only errors which are the result of early training. We must admit that gross superstition, such as belief in fairies, witches, and second-sight, is now utterly rejected by intelligent people, and hence, if any one should even have early learned the same, he will have ample opportunity to drive it if possible from his mind. Yet we find that the thing is very difficult; and there are very few indeed, no matter how firm in resolution, no matter how enlightened, who have not an undefinable dread of some supernatural apparition, which they fear to encounter under certain circumstances, such as the neighbourhood of the dead or their place of interment, when alone and in a dark night. We tell ourselves that all such terrors are foolish and sinful; still some tincture of superstition will haunt the mind, and exercise an unhallowed influence over those even who are enlightened in science, and fortified by a religious trust in God. How then is the case now with errors which are not so generally reprobated by the many? It is certain that of the many ideas entertained by man, the majority must be erroneous, since the two opposites of a proposition cannot be true at the same time. For instance, if it be true that the law of Moses contains the only true faith, it cannot be true that another code differing materially from the same can likewise point out the true faith. If we now turn our view from our own households to others, we will become conscious that some such opinion, in one shape or other, is preached to most men from their cradle. The professors of this train of ideas are the many; from some cause or other it is their interest to entertain it; hence the person who has been once sufficiently exposed to its influence, so as to imbibe it into his spirit, will have no adequate opportunity to expel it from his imagination.

I do not merely speak of one or the other set of ideas, either political, scientific, or religious, but of all alike; it is the same what they may be, so that they are generally adopted, and are not of that gross nature as to shock the sensibility of men of moderate intellect; and no matter what the few may allege, the many will tacitly adopt what the many promulgate. Does this prove that the many teach the truth, and the few are in error and darkness? Assuredly not; on the contrary, it may, and it does happen, that the few may hold their ideas by conviction, the many from convenience; and again, it may occur, that by a violent commotion, to which all human systems are liable, cherished notions, the fabrics of centuries, may be brushed away by one of those moral blasts, which occasionally sweep over the political and religious world. Let us instance two historical facts. Before the preaching of Luther the power of the Roman Pontiff was almost supreme in all civilized countries; his emissaries, with nothing but their investiture from the visible head of the ruling church, raised men to the throne and hurled them down again; every dispute was settled by an appeal to the dread power of Rome, and armies marched and fleets loosened their sails at the bidding of an authority that was said to be spiritual only in its nature and tendencies. Some few, indeed, there were who from time to time made opposition to the monstrous encroachments on the rights of all, constantly more and more attempted by pretended messengers of peace; but their fate was a speedy destruction; and neither kings nor philosophers had power enough and wisdom enough to contend with the man who called himself God's vicegerent on earth. He founded his power, it is true, on erroneous principles; but every one had been taught either to suppose it divine or to dread its crushing weight, and the world remained a willing slave. But the evil at length found a cure in its own excess. The wickedness insensibly attaching itself to uncontrolled authority overshot, through cupidity, the ample bounds in which it had exercised its sway so long and so frightfully; and a minister of its communion was roused to opposition by some real or fancied grievance done to his peculiar associates. Let me state that in this rapid sketch of a great historical event I state well-known facts, and mean not to take sides with the pontiff or his opponents; I only want to illustrate a vital principle, and leave the decision where it properly belongs, to the field of impartial history.—To proceed, when Luther commenced his oppugnation against the Church of Rome, he, without doubt, designed to counteract its power merely in one single point, in which he probably conceived himself and his associates injured by the preference shown to a monastic order to which he did not belong. To many, his opposition may have seemed unwise and foolhardy, inasmuch as nearly all previous reformers had felt the crushing hand of the ecclesiastical arm, and the weight of spiritual weapons, though wielded by a feeble old man, tottering on the brink of the grave. But circumstances, on the one hand, soon taught Luther that he must go farther than his mere initiatory steps if he would mean to succeed, and, on the other, men's minds had been gradually awakened to the absurdity of regarding all mankind fallible save the single individual who claimed to hold the keys of heaven, to lock and to unlock, to bind and to unbind, to permit and to prohibit, at pleasure. The consequence was soon seen; entire states, following the lead of their kings and princes, threw off the hated allegiance which they now openly disavowed, whilst they formerly would have demanded the instant death of whomever had doubted its divine authority; and in a few brief years the converts to a new mode of thought were powerful enough to contend for the empire with the adherents of the Bishop of Rome. I do not wish to avow a preference for either side of the question, but simply to illustrate the fact that opinions are often acquiesced in by many not from conviction, but because too many have been taught to regard them as sacred; for no one will pretend to say that the supremacy of the Pope was less erroneous before, than after the preaching of Luther.

Let us take another fact. It is now about seventy years ago when, in France, there reigned an absolute government, just as in most other states of the Old World. What the king willed, that was law; and he averred to hold his power by divine appointment, and the people were called absolute subjects, whose property, whose liberty, whose persons, whose life were at the disposal of one man, irresponsible, unapproachable to all others besides. But about the period named a new event aroused the attention of the world. On the western shore of the vast Atlantic a new nation sprung into existence, under the avowed declaration of opposition to arbitrary rule proceeding from one or many, and an unalterable determination to resist being taxed without the consent of their own deputies. The successful struggle which resulted in the independence of the States forming the American Union, confirmed the biblical doctrine that princes are amenable to their subjects for a non-performance of the duties, which the governed have a right to expect from their rulers. This rediscovery of an ancient axiom, and the necessity which the King of France was under from an exhausted treasury to consult the representatives of his people, called speedily forth a spirit of inquiry into the actual claim to sacredness of the sovereign's power and person; and in the confusion attendant upon the outbreak of the vilest passions, pent up by long ages of arbitrary taxation and oppression, the authority of the king was at first defied and then abrogated, and his person was brought before a tribunal, self-constituted and extra-judicial, and his head fell beneath the axe of an executioner, by which act all law and the sacred obligation of an oath were set at defiance. We are not engaged in an historical disquisition; it is not our purpose to explain the motives of any event, and I merely adduce this instance to show how opinions, held sacred by acquiescence and enforced by the power of prison and the sword, are set at naught when passions, breaking through the dread of these barriers, overleap the bounds which was hitherto set them, and riot in a newly-opened path, which was formerly not even approached in imagination.

If, however, the power of the Pope, which we have instanced, and the divine right of kings, with its accompanying doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, had been the result of conviction instead of cherished errors, the entire overthrow which they have experienced could not have taken place; for men are not likely to cast that off which they deem of paramount importance: witness the many martyrs to religious and political creeds who in every age preferred death to yielding their avowed doctrines. In the same manner the adoption of different views in modern times does not prove that a new conviction has dawned upon every mind; for, in the first place, many communities as yet acquiesce in the dicta of the Church of Rome, and others again blindly obey their temporal rulers without questioning their authority; and secondly, protestants in religion and republicans in politics are perhaps as little able to give good reasons for their own opinions, as ever their religious or political opponents are. It is much easier to follow a certain train of ideas adopted by others than originate one for ourselves, and much easier to refer to the multitude who agree with us as a proof that we are right than show this fact by sound and conclusive arguments.

As we hinted already, man becomes gradually used to certain opinions, just as he does to certain manipulations in mechanical pursuits, to which he is compelled or induced to apply himself daily; and no man is any more a Trinitarian or a Mahomedan by nature, than another can claim to have acquired intuitively the art and mystery of watchmaking, without having any previous knowledge of the complicated machine, by which we are enabled to measure time and distance. We then do not mean to say, whilst maintaining that the Jewish religion alone is true, that all other men who profess any other of the many moral systems which formerly governed, and to this day govern the world, are acting against their conviction of truth: though we do assert, that we base our conduct, in the main, upon the firm persuasion, that the law of Moses is true, and has been the only proper divine code ever since the day of its promulgation. We say, we will accord to those who differ from us the full benefit of heartfelt sincerity; because, claiming them to be in error, we cannot shut our eyes to the undoubted fact that, few, indeed, ever hear any thing of the Jewish religion, and what they hear is conveyed to them, for the most part, through interested and misinformed teachers. Besides, though to us the unity of God seems so self-evident a proposition, that we cannot conceive how we could doubt it, others have been taught from their infancy to associate this oneness with the secondary idea of a mediator. From the earliest years of their childhood, they have heard mentioned with reverence, with heartfelt devotion, with a sacred awe, a name which their teachers and parents say belongs to an adjunct of the Deity; they have been told, that of themselves they are children of perdition, incapable of any virtuous resolve or virtuous action, utterly rejected from divine grace, unless it be through the merits of a mediator, whose blood has been shed for a sinning world. And do you wonder, that this creed is adopted without examination in perfect simplicity of faith? I, for my part, do not; it is true, that as an Israelite, who has been taught to look upon the mercy of God as all-sufficient to cleanse him from transgression, I could not imagine the probability of a secondary deity, if my life were to depend on it; but at the same time, we must not forget, that to the greater part of our neighbours no idea whatever of our religion is ever conveyed, except it be to connect it with our state of dispersion, asserted to be a recompense for our sins, in maintaining our ancient system, and rejecting the alleged mediator. Beautiful imagery also is not wanting, to exhibit the grace and goodness of a divinity dying by human hands, to atone for the sins of man; enchanting eloquence is exhausted to convey to the mind an adequate notion of an incarnation of the divine principle in the body of a mortal, to effect the just-mentioned salvation; miracles said to have been wrought, are appealed to, in order to silence all objections; and, lastly, every one is referred to the immense strides this or the other system (for besides the Nazarenes, the Mahomedans and heathen too claim to be right) has made in the empire of opinion, whilst the Jewish belief is professed by only a comparatively few and obscure individuals. To many, who might perhaps be inclined to think, in case they were not too much absorbed by their ordinary occupations, all this is sufficient evidence in favour of the correctness of the majority in their immediate vicinity, and they acquiesce more from indolence, than conviction based on investigation; and this chiefly because the advantage of places and offices of trust and profit, the possession of renown and power, and political and social high connexions are decidedly with the many; since in all states, whether the government be monarchical or republican, the few must yield to the majority both power and patronage, and accept any distinction (whatever the laws may say) more as a favour than a right, the majority having all power, and consequently the physical ability of denying all offices and share in the government to the minority.—But to the vast multitude, who never think, except on objects immediately concerning their ease or advancement, it is enough that, what they call, *every* body believes or acts so, and they are perfectly satisfied that they are right if they believe and act as every body around them does; and every call for reasons for their conduct is answered by an appeal to the potent argument, that the vast majority is with them in error, if there be any error. There are, no doubt, many who do think, whose mind is not penetrated by the early instruction of friends and by the appeal of the learned in after-years; but they often prudently conceal what they really think, and not being acquainted with any thing better, and not knowing where to apply for true instruction, they dismiss the subject from their mind, not being able to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion from their own research; and at length they fall insensibly into the train of thinking so generally adopted, persuading themselves, perhaps, at the same time, that so many wise, good, and useful men can scarcely be mistaken, or that they would wilfully and knowingly teach what they believe to be false.

I fear that the observations which I have laid before you, brethren, have detained you already too long; I must, therefore, leave them in their unfinished state, to be resumed, God willing, on some fitting future occasion.—I started with the idea that, were our religion the popular one, we should have followers and devoted adherents as a spontaneous offering to public opinion. But the case is very different now; the true faith, the faith which we uphold, is professed, and has ever been professed, by but a handful of men, compared with the mass of mankind. It is its truth alone which has upheld it; no power, no learning, no eloquence has wrought the miracle of the preservation of the heavenly law which is ours. On the contrary, all three, namely, power, learning, eloquence, have been unceasingly exerted to break down the code of Moses, and to scatter its followers among the many nations of the earth. The majority have appealed to us to forego the belief in one God, and to acquiesce in the intervention of a mediator, and of a saviour the child of a woman. The Bible itself has been appealed to, so as to prove that God is more than one person, I shudder almost, as I speak it, that the unchangeable, the undying, the sole God, had become incarnate, multiplied, mortal, subject as such to sorrow, pain, and death. Ha! how the barbarians raved when, like the sheep that are led to slaughter, we stood unresisting, still, patient, resigned, and received the death-blow, exclaiming, "The Lord is One." Ha! how did the anger of the persecutor kindle, when we refused the proffered gifts of place, of wealth, of life, and joy, only that we might remain humble followers of that great, adorable Being who lifts up the lowly, and casts down the proud. Yes! these were the trophies which Israel carried off in the strife for the sacred right of freedom of opinion; these are the imperishable honours which will attach to our name to the end of time.

But it is not to be concealed, that many were led, we would willingly believe that it was from conviction of some sort, to amalgamate with the gentile mass, and we must confess, that even now, when persecution has nearly sheathed her bloody sword, there are those who no longer wish for a share in the good which the Lord has spoken concerning Israel. Yea, there are apostates! the peace and prosperity of the gentiles allures them, and they insensibly sink into the opinions which alone can justify their change of religion. Thank God! compared to the mass, the number of these renegades is but small, and the house of Israel flourishes like the vigorous monarch of the forest, that sheds its refreshing shade though some excrescences have been lopt off by the woodman's axe. And whenever then any desertion does take place, let us warn our children of the danger of listening to the overtures of strangers to our faith, and to point out the causes which led our brothers to forsake our communion. In a word, it is an early and thorough religious education in our homesteads, in our schools, and in our houses of prayer, which should fortify us against the seductive appeals which a popular religion addresses to our interests; the

Jews should be taught what they are to believe as Jews, and why they should be Jews. We know that it requires some self-conquest to exhibit the outward tests of an unpopular opinion, before those who do not profess it; and unfortunately, it is mainly this cowardly feeling which not rarely deters some of us from avowing their belief, and practising the duties which the law demands of them. Now, it is education which should counteract this fear of appearing singular; so that when questioned concerning the reasons of our practices, we may give intelligible and satisfactory answers, both to our own associates and to the stranger who may inquire of us the ways of the Lord. If then we are well informed, we will revere that holy faith which binds us indissolubly to the God who was, who is, and who will be, and we will gladly bear our testimony to the truth of the law which has stood the shocks and vicissitudes of so many changes in our national existence, though it may not be received by our gentile neighbours as their guide of life, and the belief in the Oneness continue confined to the small number which comprises the descendants of Abraham.

Such a firmness characterized the father of our race, who in the days of gray antiquity, opposed himself almost alone to the opinions of the many and mighty, who surrounded him on all sides. Fearlessly and boldly, the blessed son of Terah left his father's house, where already his attachment to a pure theology had exposed him to persecution, to wander away into a distant land, where also the name of the Lord was not honoured. He went forward among strangers, and proclaimed aloud that he did not believe as the inhabitants of the land believed; and he instructed his household to walk in the ways of his heavenly Master, whilst he impressed on their minds to love justice and righteousness. Even when adverse circumstances seemed to render dark his path of life, he did not waver in his faithful allegiance to the behests of his God; and he sealed himself with the sign of the covenant, although the precept was new and given only to him and his descendants; and when years thereafter he was bidden to render up the only son of his Sarah, as an offering on the altar, he hesitated not to comply with the commandment.—In brief, he adopted in early life the belief in the One Supreme, from a sincere conviction of its truth; he did this when alone among idolaters, undismayed by the danger he incurred, unswayed by the example of the multitude; and during the remainder of his days he omitted no opportunity to prove that his belief was something more than a profession of opinions, and that it enabled him to conquer his self-love, and to sacrifice his dearest thing on earth, when he deemed this to be the course marked out by the strict line of duty.

This was the faith of Abraham which raised him so preëminently above the rest of his contemporaries, and the remembrance of this faith the Lord promised to preserve unto his latest descendants. For, when Isaac was sore pressed by famine, the Lord appeared to him, and forbade him to go down to Egypt, and then continued: "Sojourn in this land and I will be with thee and bless thee; for unto thee and thy seed I will give all these lands, and I will fulfil the oath which I have sworn to thy father Abraham. And I will multiply thy seed like the stars of heaven, and I will give to thy seed all these lands, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי וישמר משמרתי
מצותי חקותי ותורתי : ברא' כו' ה' :

" Because that Abraham hearkened unto my voice, and kept my observances, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Genesis xxvi. 5.

The language of this promise is too self-evident to require any extended explanation ; for God clearly conveys thereby the consoling assurance that the virtue of Abraham, in remaining a steadfast adherent of the true faith, should always stand the protection of his descendants in all their tribulations; and that as descendants of Abraham, that is, as men marked by the same inward faith in the unity of God, and by the outward observance of the divine ordinances and laws, they should become a blessing to all the nations of the earth. Be it then your study, sons of Abraham ! to remain true as the glorious father of your race was before you; depart not from the divine standard to the right or the left; regard not the fewness of your own brothers and the multitudes devoted to other creeds; heed not the call which would induce you to give up the oppressed and despised house of Jacob, for the glory and splendour of the gentile church; and reflect that only as the followers of One who is unchangeably the same throughout all time and space, can you become a light to the world, a light which shall in due time dispel the mists of superstition, of unbelief, of error and sin, when the sun of righteousness will shed forth his beneficent light over all the children of man, even for the sake of the virtue of Abraham, the true friend and adorer of the Creator of heaven and earth.

O Father, to whom nothing is too wonderful! deign to bless us with thy peace; strengthen us in the moments of adversity, and uphold our spirit at the hour when worldly prosperity smiles upon us; in order that in every situation of life we may experience the workings of thy gracious countenance within our heart, to support us when our soul is weary, and to check us when our pride would teach us to regard ourselves as mighty, forgetful that thy blessing alone gives us prosperity and peace. And teach us not to look with envy upon the possessions of our neighbours, and to value as naught any worldly greatness which might withdraw us from thy holy service. So that we may live as our fathers lived, worshipping Thee in truth, and loved by Thee even as trusty servants and faithful children, whose body is Thine, and whose soul is the work of thy hands. May this be thy will, now and forever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XVII.

THE DOCTRINES OF JUDAISM.

O Lord God of Israel! who didst guard the infancy of our people, and bless the parents of our race, because that they walked before Thee in the love of thy name and obedience to thy commandments, vouchsafe at this time and at this hour to listen to the prayers of our scattered captives who as yet love to avow themselves thy servants, and to uphold the truth of thy law. Bless them as Thou didst bless their fathers, love them as Thou didst love the righteous ones of old; and let thy gracious goodness be their stay, thy light their wisdom in which they may walk, that they be rendered happy in this life and the life everlasting. Amen.

Brethren!

Religion, that blissful bond which unites man to his God, naturally divides itself into two parts, religion of thought, and religion of action. If we have no regard to motives, which being yet in thought are called principles, or bases on which actions are founded, there can be no action of any sort; for we move not from the spot on which we stand, nay, do not so much as raising our hand, without some cause for our simple motion. Whatever action then takes place is founded upon some principle, or moving cause; and consequently the act is merely the exhibition of the thought, feeling, motive, principle or by whatever term you express your meaning, which lies buried in our soul. When we now say of a man, that he has good or bad principles, we only mean to express, that the habitual motives which prompt his conduct are of that kind which will result in good or bad acts, as the case may be. In commencing now a course of conduct, if we wish that religion, or what is the same, a sincere acknowledgment of divine power, should be the pervading characteristic, the mind must be imbued with that species of feeling which, responded to in acts, will redound to the greatest glory of God. Since, however, the religion of acts is a matter of revelation,—I mean to say, since our active duties are prescribed to us in the Scriptures which certify herein of the will of God: it is but proper that we should search the same source for the correct training of the thoughts. The first step is to see, Why we should be religious? the second, How to become so? In both these important points the Bible is the sure guide, which we may follow without fear of going astray.

We just defined religion to be "the bond which unites man to his God." It is therefore union with God, peace with our Maker which we are to seek. Now, the question recurs: "Who is our God?" It may be difficult for the child of the desert, for the native of interminable forests whom no light of truth cheers with precious knowledge, to answer this query satisfactorily to himself; but to the possessor of the Bible, the reply is one of great simplicity, it is: Our God is that great Intelligence who, being too far removed from the search of human knowledge to be understood by finite beings, created alone and unaided everything which exists and moves around us on every side, be this on the earth on which we live, or in the immense extent of space where millions and millions of worlds, many far larger than our own earth, abide and move, and they are alike creatures of the same Power that created and shaped the form of each of us, and the countless hosts of those who have departed from this life. The Omnipotence, creating all, sustaining all, who is visible in every blade of grass, in every pearly drop that lies tremblingly reposing in the half-open cup of a flower which in heedlessly passing you crush beneath your foot, no less than in the gigantic snow-capped mountain which must ever remain inaccessible to man—this Omnipotence cares for each and every one who is the effect of his work, the offspring of his creation, and is solicitous for his welfare. Awful thought! consoling assurance! the King of the universe loves me, the earthworm whom He has fashioned! the Holiest Essence in whom there is no evil watches over, cares for, and gives wisdom and sustenance to me who am impure in thought, sinful in conduct, and brief of years! And does He need my aid? can I add the least to his infinite greatness? As well might the infant raise in its tiny arms the mother in whose bosom he buries his face; as well might the midday sun envy the light of the taper which pales in his presence. No! God loves me, because, and only because He is good, and delights in the happiness of his creatures, and not because they can add in the least to his beatitude, which is as perfect as we can conceive it to be, and not capable of augmentation by the actions of mortals; unless we might so term the satisfaction, which the Bible expresses itself figuratively as appertaining to the Lord, in consequence of the virtuous deeds of the righteous on earth and their words of sincere prayer, which are represented as an agreeable offering in his presence. But even in the last instances we must not suppose that thereby God's greatness is in any manner enhanced; for it is only that we are certified of his approbation in terms befitting human understanding, not however corresponding with the essence of the divine Majesty, of which no words can give us an adequate conception. We must not forget that words are exponents of sentiments; but since our whole intercourse is with beings like ourselves, who more or less have the same capacities and the same wants, consequently the same feelings or moral sensations: it follows that whatever idea we have of language must of necessity limit itself to finite things and objects confined to and terminable in this life. We may feel, nay, we do feel the existence of a vast extension into farther—farther—farther space and time which we imagine to be eternity; but still we measure this eternity even by the diurnal revolutions of the planets and by the annual change of seasons; in short our very eternity is but a long extension of measured time, as our infinity limits itself to a great enlargement of our notions of space. How really far short all this must necessarily leave us from a correct comprehension of eternity and infinity, can easily be understood by the commonest comprehension; and thus in going beyond ourselves in words and in thoughts, we are necessarily bound by terms, words or expressions which are applicable only to things of the earth, as we have said, all of short duration and of measurable limits. Were our intercourse on the contrary with beings of a higher order, were we to become familiar with those who live to an actual eternity: not alone our ideas would become enlarged, but our words, too, would have a different bearing, and adapt themselves naturally to the then extended sphere of our knowledge. Let us state the argument again for the sake of greater clearness. As we now are, our words have constant reference to mortality and mortals; for the earth and sun also are creatures, and therefore subject to change and decay, if so it be the will of their Maker to change or destroy them; our feelings and knowledge belong to beings of a finite nature, and therefore the words expressive of our feelings are one and all, with few exceptions indeed, referable to earthly existence only; and even the few exceptions noticed are just such approaches to a different state of existence as must argue a longing after better things, a foretaste merely of another state, as an evidence of the diversity of spirit from matter; and lastly, if our sensations were by any possibility raised to a higher standard, our words would either be different, or their application would receive the higher significancy, suitable to our more exalted existence.

Now, however, we are essentially mortal, finite in time, limited in wisdom and knowledge. How are we in this respect, then, to be certified of the nature of the Deity and of the character of his works? Is there, perhaps, an angelic language which we can employ when speaking of the Most High? Certainly not; we have only the words of ordinary life to convey to each other our ideas of his being and power;

hence, when we speak of Him, who is immortal and infinite, we employ terms fitting to a mortal's apprehension, not to our Creator's infinite vastness of power, existence, goodness, happiness, wisdom, and mercy! And He will forgive us if, in our ignorance how to indicate his praise, we use terms unbefitting his truth and holiness; if from our inability to express what we feel but which yet are unable to utter, we speak of Him as we would do of man, and ascribe to Him human attributes which are nevertheless foreign to his nature. Even the word which I have just used, "nature," is quite inappropriate to God; nature means, correctly speaking, organization, which presupposes a derivation from a superior Power; and still it is the only word which we can employ, when we wish to express in one term the whole system of attributes which we fancy to constitute the essence of the Lord.

But in accidentally carrying out a passing thought on the subject of the language which the Bible uses in speaking of God, and which demands more than a mere casual elucidation: I fear that I have too far strayed from my subject in reference to the truths or doctrines which the Scriptures teach. To return, however: The Decalogue, that first of the great expositions of our duties, commences with the demand of the acknowledgment of the Godhead of Him who spoke to our ears, and whose fire of glory blazed visibly before our astonished eyes. The first motive which was placed before us "why we should obey?" was the announcement of the Everlasting "I am," that He is, was, and will be; consequently, that since He alone exists as such, no one can have any claim to our obedience, which might by any chance interfere with the homage due to the everliving One our God, who desires from a free choice, without compulsion, without interest, without hope of return, to bring us near unto his service. The second motive was "gratitude;" for it says, "I, thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt," indicating thereby, that the obedience claimed was not an arbitrary demand by the strong from the weak, but a debt which the child ought gladly to pay to the Father, the obliged servant to his bountiful Benefactor.

We must now observe that the truth of God's existence promulgated in the first commandment, is unchanged to our very day; there is yet the same overruling Power who guides the universe as a father guides the early steps of his child, who provides for all and cares for all, even for those who are unbelieving in his existence, or heedless of obeying his will. From the day that the Lord called Moses up to the Mount Sinai and spoke to the people Israel, no new power has started into existence to claim a share of his glory, or a portion in the worship due to Him alone.—Moreover, whatever motives of gratitude existed from the beginning exist also now with full force; since all the good which man enjoys in his individual and social capacity he derives immediately, without the intervention of a secondary power, from the grace of the Creator only. If it could be true that a minor or equal power could be found in all the immense space which the Lord has called forth, He, who is and was our God, would have commanded us to acknowledge and obey him. This however is nowhere pointed out, nowhere hinted at; and therefore as servants of the Most High we must reject every idea of such a secondary deity; for to entertain it after we have been instructed of the will of God, would be high treason against the majesty of Heaven. —Treason against human authority means a wilful rising in rebellion against the lawfully constituted authorities of a country, on the part of those who owe them allegiance and obedience. We cannot indeed injure the Deity, in the sense of the word a rebel can the person of the sovereign or the authorities of a country, by depriving the same of the ability to govern; but as far as the actor himself is concerned, he places himself beyond the pale of heavenly rule whenever he adores another being instead of God, or he associates another in his mind as sharing the dominion of the world; whereas to the Lord alone belongs the government, and his are the greatness, the majesty, victory, and glory. The universality of Providence proves that He is everywhere active in all that occurs in the world; and the uniformity of the superintendence here discovered argues, that there must of necessity be a oneness of design, a singleness of purpose, which can only proceed from one single sentient controlling Power, with whom there can be no associate to share his prerogative, or to limit his ability to work his will.

This view of the Deity answers the question we propounded: "Why we should be religious?" For if we can by any possibility bind ourselves closely to our God, if by any act of ours we can draw down upon ourselves his love and approbation: it follows that we are bound to do so, both by motives of gratitude for his many favours, and by a proper regard to the best and dearest interests of ourselves, seeing that we are entirely in the power of God, who can make us feel the weight of his indignation whenever in his wisdom He may see fit to chastise us for our conduct. That, however, it is possible to bind ourselves to our Creator, or, in other words, to become religious, is certified to us in the revelation of his will which He graciously communicated to us. He left us not in doubt whether or not we have duties to perform, what these duties might be, what we are to believe of Him, and what we are to hope for or dread from the result of our course of life: on the contrary, He himself became the Teacher of mankind, and made himself known, first through his works, or, as some call it, the book of nature, wherein is legibly written that the Author of so many beautiful, great, and wonderful things must be beyond measure, good, wise, and powerful; and secondly, at a time when He thought fit to come in his glory to teach a law to the children of man, the first truth He proclaimed was the acknowledgment of his being as the first principle, the chief motive which should prompt their actions. It is not our purpose to-day to diverge to the other branch of religion, to wit, the duties; though in passing we may say, that in addition to "why we should obey," we were certified "how we should obey;" in other words, duties defined and determined in their nature were laid before us for our acceptance, by following which we were told we should render ourselves worthy of the favour of our heavenly Master.

The fundamental principle which lies as the chief incentive to the observance of duties is accordingly the belief in God; for without this conviction there could be no inducement whatever to practise any virtue, saving only that mere sordid interest and personal convenience could be promoted thereby. But it needs no great power of reasoning to prove that such a basis of action must lead to great evils, whenever the bad passions, which form an integral part of human nature, should, from some cause, become predominant for the moment. Suppose, for instance, that jealousy, hatred, or revenge should be excited in an unbeliever in the Deity, and arm him with a deadly weapon, place his victim in the range of his murderous steel, and if no human eye watches him, the life-blood of his fellow will soon dye his hands, and he will walk away, perhaps unwhipped by the scourge of partial justice or corrupted tribunals, glorying in his iniquity, defying the power of the Invisible, who unseen and unbelieved in, will yet watch his crime, and mete out retribution when the hour of unsleeping vengeance shall arrive.

We now have two additional principles evolved from the first one named. That is to say: that as there is a God, there must also be a law, if we mean to believe that He takes cognizance of the acts done in the world; or, there must be an immutable rule, a steady unvarying standard of right established by the Most High himself, according to which every act can be measured, and man can know whether to condemn the actor or to approve of his doings.—Lastly, that as there are a God and a law of his ordaining, there must be a reward and a punishment, according to the merits or demerits of every one of our deeds. Let us explain ourselves. Since God necessarily loves his creatures, and as He has given them a free scope to choose their own course of life, it is impossible to believe that He should not have placed somewhere a scheme of laws which must be universally beneficial. Individuals there are, who feign to think for themselves; and these, though often learned and of extensive acquirements and experience, differ so widely in their rules of life, that the unwise and the inexperienced cannot take their instruction for a guide to lead them safely through the dangers and trials of life. If even we had no Bible, we would search for some means to discover what might be the will of God with regard to man; we would seek for light, and be sorely disappointed if our search were in vain. The very proneness to idolatry and the establishment of false worships among men prove, that there is a want in the human mind, a longing in our souls, which cannot be satisfied except it rest for support and aid upon the immortal essence of the Creator of man. Now the inferential existence of a divinely revealed will is satisfactorily answered by the pages of the sacred Volume, which is so familiar to our very nature, being from early youth known to us, either by our own study, or at least by the conduct of all around us in some shape or other, that we fairly forget that it is a treasure precious beyond price, endued with wisdom, far more than we can conceive. And yet all rejection of its behests will sooner or later prove to have proceeded from ignorance or from wilful blindness; and *that* man never yet lived, who on his dying bed ever regretted that he had remained a steady follower of the precepts it inculcates. In short, the pursuit of the duties it teaches will bind us to God, and will bring us his peace which is so dear, so consoling to the soul of man; for what can the world do to him who is armed with the sacred panoply, that impervious armour of proof, which the holiness of a religious life throws around him?—But if such be the natural consequence of obedience, it at once brings us to our proposition, that there must be reward as the price of virtue, which at last is nothing more than a strict conformity to the Bible in obedience to its divine Author; and as this one branch of the idea embraces necessarily the other, that of punishment for disobedience, we at once maintain, that the existence of God and the fact of a divine legislation require, to complete the moral motives for religious action, the doctrine of reward and punishment. This proposition does not mean that the merciful One delights in inflicting evil upon his creatures, as some wicked men have pretended to find recorded in the Scriptures; but that the disregard of the duties embraced in revelation either draws down evil on the perpetrators as a necessary consequence, or that the evil committed is of that dangerous tendency to the well-being of society, that the Almighty has either implanted such an abhorrence for the crime in the breast of all men, that they will inflict condign punishments, some of which are confessedly laid down or demanded in Scripture, or, where human power fails, He has reserved to himself the awful prerogative of causing the transgressors to feel the weight of his unerring justice, seeing that they remained unmoved to gratitude, despite of the many benefits which He had bestowed on them, no less than on the rest of his creation.

"But," says the timid doubter, "I see the wicked, him at least whom the Bible rule would so designate, prosper in his undertakings; he is at peace; he is honoured; a virtuous wife crowns his days with happiness; numerous children, all blessed with health and intellect, surround his fireside: is this retribution?" No, doubter, this is not retribution, it is indulgence; God is merciful; He is long-suffering; He sees not with human eyes; He measures not by a human standard. There may be a mysterious link running through a long series of years, and be a good reason why the wicked one should be happy, of which both you and I cannot form any conception; and though we may wonder, it is our duty as servants of God whom we wish to adore, not to grumble at the blessings which He gives unto those we justly deem wicked, even supposing that there is no error in our judgment. But independently of the retribution which may yet reach transgressors in this life, there is the life of the soul, which dies not with the corruptible body, and this extends the time of retribution beyond the mere short season of months which is allotted to man here below. With the body the spirit dies not; and when the sinner is by death removed from his family, who then cannot be temporarily even injured by the visitation which reaches his guilty soul—who can tell what the agonies may be with which the condemned is afflicted? he may be conscious of light, yet dwell in darkness; he may pine for a knowledge of higher truths which is the reward of the righteous, yet feel a dark, starless, heavy night weighing him down to an unendurable sorrow, shut out for a season, till his guilt be atoned for, from the presence of the Lord where the pious ones dwell who have obeyed His will.

But it is not given to us to understand, much less to explain, the state of blessedness or condemnation after death. All that is for us to know is, that the Lord's power to send retribution for guilt is not confined to the few years that we are permitted to exist in this life, and that the Scriptures speak distinctly of a state hereafter connected, as it may be required from the conduct of man himself, with a due system of reward or punishment. That there may be an hereafter has been proved from analogy by philosophers who had not the light of revelation; and that it is so is certified to the believer by the words of Scripture, which, as we have laid down in the commencement of our subject, ought to constitute as much the authority for our inward thoughts and opinions, as they are our guide for our outward conduct. The arguments and texts to prove this will probably be given on a future occasion; but for the present we will merely lay down the three principles, which we have endeavoured to elucidate in the foregoing remarks. There are, to be sure, other doctrines which religion lays down for our acceptance; but they are the consequences of revelation, not principles on which to found our conduct in general.

The Jew, therefore, is required to believe firmly, unalterably, unwaveringly, these truths:

First. I believe that there exists one, sole, omnipotent, incorporeal, eternal God, who created, solely and alone, all the things which compose the entire range of nature; that all spirit emanates from Him, and that all matter is of his creation. Consequently that whatever homage and adoration man may offer to a superior power is due only to our God, the Lord everlasting and King eternal, before whom the mightiest are little, the holiest impure.

Secondly. I believe that in order to secure the happiness of the inhabitants of this earth, and to let them know what is his will, He from the first beginning made himself known first to man in his innocence, and afterwards in his state of sin, and told him the duties he was to observe. And that, when the descendants of this man forgot wilfully their allegiance, the Lord punished them, and raised up a people to whom He meant to confide his law in trust for the ultimate benefit of all mankind. And when, accordingly, the proper time had arrived, his glory was made manifest before all this people, and He spoke to them audibly, and enjoined on them the duties they should obey.

Thirdly. I believe firmly that the Lord is the Judge of all his creatures; that, seeing and knowing all our deeds, He will without forgetting any punish with due visitation all transgressions against his law, whether this be in this state of existence, in the life to come, or at the resurrection of the dead; and that every act, which is conformable to the religion of Heaven, will be recompensed by a blessedness, either temporal or eternal, which the Merciful and All-just God whom we adore will adjudge to be commensurate with our deeds.

Much more might be added to elucidate this subject, but we must forbear at the present; having already occupied nearly my usual time in this address. Yet my purpose will not be complete without calling your attention to a passage in the Bible, which is of the gravest importance, and which nevertheless has been overlooked by too many persons. The Nazarenes have boldly asserted that their religion was the first to proclaim the life of the spirit of man, and its retribution after death; they aver that the Pentateuch is silent on the subject, and the passages of the prophets and psalms, which hardly bear any other interpretation than as referring to immortality, they do not regard as explicit enough. We, of course, do not admit any claim to divine origin for their books of authority; we reject them altogether; so did our early teachers; consequently if the new religion were the only foundation for the doctrine of immortality, it could never have been admitted among the truths of the Jewish religion. Now, whatever of obscurity persons may fancy to rest on the passages in the Bible, none will aver that this is the case with the books of the Jewish doctors of later ages; they one and all speak of reward, of punishment, of resurrection, of judgment, as matters of general acquiescence; consequently they at least must have derived them from the general system, whether traditional or scriptural, current and accepted among them. Yet it would be easy to silence all cavil by a multitude of quotations from the Scriptures, to prove what were the prophetic views on the subject; for the present we will not do it, but confine ourselves to the passage alluded to. You know that when Joseph had made himself known to his brothers, he sent them back to Canaan to bring his father to him into Egypt. Israel, in consequence, travelled in the pursuit of his journey, and came to Beërsheba; he was at that time one hundred and thirty years old, enfeebled by age and suffering, and looking forward to a speedy release by the hand of death. In this place he performed his usual acts of devotion in honour of the God of his father Isaac, and during the following night the vision of prophecy was given to him in these words:

אנכי האל אלהי אביך אל תירא מרדה מצרימה כי
לגוי גדול אשימך שם : אנכי ארד עמך מצרימה ואנכי
אעלך גם עלה ויוסף ישית ידו על עיניך :

ברא׳ מו׳ ג׳ ד׳ :

"I am the God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will make thee there a great nation. I—even I will go down with thee to Egypt, and I—even I will surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thy eyes." Gen. xlvi. 3, 4.

What is precisely meant by the idea of the glory of God accompanying a man, we cannot say with any degree of certainty; it is spoken of in Scripture as the greatest blessing granted to the most righteous; in truth, it is an idea too elevated for human nature to comprehend. But whatever it may be, it was promised to the righteous father of our race, when he was on his journey to the land where his mortal life was to close, and where his children should become a great people. But observe, brethren! the phraseology of the words: "I will go down with thee to Egypt," the glory of God would assuredly accompany him in his pilgrimage to the country where the blessing of the numerous progeny promised to Abraham was to be fulfilled, as also the announcement of centuries of labour, foretold at the same time. Consequently, Jacob's earthly life must terminate long before this could, and, in fact, did take place. Still does the verse continue, "And I will surely bring thee up again," evidently meaning, that with the Israel, bereft of life, the spirit severed from the earthly covering, the glory of God would go back from Egypt to Palestine, whither the body was carried by his children after Joseph had literally closed his eyes. The blessing was given to Israel, individually, consequently in him alone could the accomplishment take place. The people were left behind centuries after Jacob's body was removed; therefore his mortal clay was not even included in the glorious exodus from Egypt. But when the corpse of the archfather was carried up to his sepulchre by a sorrowing people, the glory of God, promised to be present, was present, and the purified spirit, no longer suffering with the corruptible flesh, stood high, exalted amid the righteous, who are angels of mercy in the joyful presence of the Lord!

O may this be our portion, Father of love and truth! to be received by Thee, to be taken up by thy glory, to dwell in thy presence for ever more. Amen.

Tebeth 6th. } 5603.
Decem. 9th. }

DISCOURSE XVIII.

ON MIRACLES.

No. I.

O Thou! who appearedst unto thy messenger in the flaming bush, which though lucent with fire was not consumed, we acknowledge thy power and greatness as did our fathers whom Thou didst call unto thy service. And now, unworthy though we be of thy mercy, we come before Thee to seek thy undeserved favour, because that Thou didst swear to preserve us when thy justice would visit our iniquities. Do Thou therefore unto us even according to the prophetic vision which Moses beheld, when he was first called to become thy messenger of grace and justice; and let us be unconsumed, our numbers undiminished, whilst the flaming fire of tribulation purifies us of our impurities, whilst the stains of sin are cleansed by the fiery ordeal of the wrath which our transgressions provoke. Cause us thus to feel thy chastening rule, O Thou! who art the God of nations, and Arbiter of the fate of man; the everlasting One, who speaketh and fulfilleth; who commandeth and every thing springeth into being; who slayeth and there is no one to hinder Him; who showeth mercy and forgiveness, and there is no one to say, "What doest Thou?" And let thy name be glorified through us, the children of Israel, and cause many nations to behold thy mercy at thy return to Zion, the city of our desires. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In my last address I laid before you the three principal articles on which our religious system is founded. These were, briefly, the belief in the existence of God, the existence of a revelation, and the existence of accountability, or a righteous scheme of rewards and punishments. We may say with perfect truth that, without admitting the whole of these three, there can be no religion; for we would not submit to its restraints, if there were no Head and Chief, capable through his wisdom and power to direct our will; we could not obey Him, if there were no prescribed rules which we could follow out in our course of conduct; and lastly, many, if not all, of us, would not follow the dictates of an acknowledged Supreme even, if we did not dread his power, or looked up to Him for a favourable judgment on our deeds. Man may aver that he would practise what he terms virtue, even if there were no God, from motives of general benevolence to his species; exercise justice and mercy, though there were no precepts to direct him, it being most consonant with the refined feelings of human nature; and lastly, be good and righteous from no motives of reward, from no fear of punishment, but only because the good man must naturally love the good and eschew the evil, simply because of their intrinsic qualities, and because the inherent loveliness of virtue and the natural deformity of vice carry with them their own reward and punishment, as the case may be. Such reasoning would hold good, were man that perfect being which this theory would require him to be; were he in a state of nature benevolent, generous, docile, obedient, honest, chaste, and sober;

were he, when tempted, always averse to practising vice, though there were no fear of bodily injury to prevent him. But experience proves, that man is only capable of a high degree of perfection, not perfect, however, in his natural state; that even with instruction he may feel *drawn* towards benevolence and generosity, and be capable of becoming docile, honest, chaste, and sober, and yet be the very reverse in his conduct; and that lastly the abstract love of virtue is no safeguard against the desire for indulgence, if opportunity, unchecked by outward restraint, tempt the weak son of earth to taste of the dangerous fruits of self-indulgence. Without, therefore, enlarging at present on these points, we will reassert what we started with, that without God, revelation, and retribution, no virtue, deserving of the name, can have any existence, no matter what the unthinking may say to the contrary.

Besides, however, these necessary truths, there are others which might have been otherwise, but which have become incorporated with religion, either as historical events, or as the promises of the spirit of God, which both must be admitted as true, the first class, as things which have actually taken place, the second, as certain to occur; since the Being from whom they emanate is infallible, and cannot, therefore, predict or promise any thing which will not be ultimately fulfilled.

Historical facts, which serve as the basis of doctrines connected with our religion, are solely and alone to be looked for in Scripture, which of itself bears internal evidence of its truth, and is itself an historical fact, or traditional truth of religion. In the same manner the prophetic truths, as we aptly term the promises of God, are also contained in the same vehicle of faith; and consequently such only are to be admitted into the articles of our religion, as are substantially borne out by internal consistency, and supported by the words of the Bible, in their evident and common sense meaning. This belief in the history and prediction of the Bible becomes the duty of every Israelite; although this acquiescence in facts and promises would presuppose an admission of a state of things differing materially from every-day life, in other words, the truth of miracles, which are produced by a change of nature as we find it organized through means of our bodily organs.

It is true that revelation, or the Biblical record, contains also the commandment of the acknowledgment of the Deity as a part of divine legislation; nevertheless this command did not establish the existence of God as a new fact which did not exist before, but merely recited this existence as a truth which had existed already from the beginning, and which the sound common sense of man must admit as a matter of necessity more than of belief. God's existence is not established by the precept; but the precept was given because of his existence being the basis, the starting-point, upon which all good acts are founded, and from which all virtuous resolves must proceed. So also the admission that there are acts which are pleasing to God is, as we have said, a prerequisite for religion; and if the record now contains such general directions as are evidently conducive to the general prosperity of society and the well-being of individuals, we must say, that these laws or facts of revelation are not only true because they are commanded, but also because the human mind requires such directions to satisfy its craving for what is in itself good and beautiful. But there are other facts recorded, and other commandments given, which need not necessarily be so, and which might have been otherwise if God had so ordained it; and though the latter are necessary now to a correct religious life, human reasoning would not have discovered them by unaided research; and they therefore do not, and many of them cannot, appeal to our reason as a ground for believing the first and obeying the latter.

But, although the details of the Scriptures are not necessary truths, they are manifestations of the will of the Lord, who in this manner declared what He chose to prohibit as evil, and what He wished to command as good. In the same manner, though the flood, for instance, was not a necessary consequence of the deeds of the Antediluvians, as another punishment equally efficacious might have been dispensed, its occurrence has rendered it an historical fact, recorded in the Bible, and thus it has become a matter on which we are not at liberty to doubt or to offer any speculations of our own, inconsistent with the text of the sacred volume. The same holds good with almost every fact of which we have any account in the Bible. Yet it has to be observed, that all the occurrences which are related to us, although of their truth there can and ought to be no doubt on the mind of a believer, are not of themselves articles of faith, or that kind of facts which has a bearing on our course of conduct. In fact the greater number is merely recorded as having occurred in the course of the transactions, which the Lord was pleased to permit being done, and all such acts are only surprising or claiming our attention, as they are of uncommon magnitude, or out of the ordinary course of events with which our experience has rendered us familiar. It would evidently consume a great deal of time to glance merely even at all the facts of Scripture, and to argue their reasonableness; we will therefore only take up a few in connexion with some brief remarks on the miraculous power.

Perhaps no one fact of Scripture has given more cause for cavil to unbelievers than the alleged improbability of miracles, especially as they do not occur before our eyes in our own days. But let us look into the nature of any miracle recounted in the Bible; take for instance the first mission of Moses, when he beheld a bush flaming in fire without being consumed: and it will strike you, that the object of the appearance was not of a trifling kind, not merely performed to show off an extraordinary power before an astonished audience; but to introduce some great and important event in history, which had an important bearing upon the affairs of mankind in general, or at least to teach a true and wholesome lesson to the people before whom the transaction took place. To infer the probability of such an occurrence, we should consider who caused the same to happen, and what gives to general events, of which we are informed, an air of plausibility? To commence with the latter part of our proposition:—we say that we believe any event to have happened, no matter how grand the effect be said to have been produced, if we can suppose that the means and strength of the agents were equal to the effect said to have been produced. Let us take an example from an occurrence not now very rare, but which was utterly unheard of within less than the age of many persons yet living, that of a man ascending high above the earth in a machine of peculiar construction. Were we to be told that the aeronaut accomplished this feat by means of a heavy iron structure, and of complicated contrivance: we would, with our present impressions, pronounce the thing impossible and untrue. But if we were to be informed that he employed an air-tight silken bag, filled with a well-known fluid, many times lighter than the air we breathe, and which will therefore float in the atmosphere, just as lighter substances will float on the surface of the water, though partly immersed therein, and that he was conveyed in this voyage in a frail car attached by ropes to the air-filled silken bag: they who are familiar with the laws of nature, as laid open by the late discoveries in science, would pronounce the relation not alone probable, but true likewise, athough no ocular demonstration had made the thing manifest to their outward sensual organs. But suppose that, before the discovery of the existence of the different gases had been demonstrated, and their respective specific weights had been determined, one had proposed to accomplish a voyage in the air, he would have been pronounced as attempting impossibilities; or should he have succeeded, by a natural process known to him only, he would have risked an accusation of witchcraft, which would have been fatal to him from the ignorance of those who witnessed his miraculous exhibition. Of course there are many hundred instances which, at one time actually impossible from the want of the proper knowledge of producing them, have become of late matters of common notoriety, to such a degree, that we cease to regard them with wonder. I will notice one single fact only, bearing strongly upon our discussion. Before the art of printing was invented, books could only be multiplied by the slow process of transcribing each letter separately, one at a time. Just about four hundred years ago the inventive genius of man was led upon the idea of contriving the multiplying of transcripts by machinery of very simple construction; and so wonderful were the cheapness at which books were offered, and the rapidity with which they were multiplied by those who did not at once make public their mode of accomplishing this astonishing work, considered, that the art was ascribed to supernatural agency and demoniacal power, by those whose ignorance caused them to doubt the possibility for man to accomplish that, which in our day is too generally diffused to excite the smallest attention.

This is the case where a mere mortal is the agent; impossibilities to some are pastimes to others; and what one age fails to realize, becomes in a succeeding one matter of every-day occurrence.—Now let us ascend from man to his Maker. What is God, regarded as Master of the world? All-powerful. What do we call all-powerful? That He is able to do whatever He pleases, every thing, though it be beyond the power of accomplishment by the greatest of men, nay, even of all men combined.—What is nature? The organization of things in every state of existence in all the extent of creation, from the commencement to the end, as God has ordained them, and as they were arranged by Him, just in such a manner as seemed best adapted to the ends of his wisdom.—Can God change nature? Certainly; nature adds nothing to his power and greatness, since He alone has ordained it; there is moreover no other power to interfere with Him in his judgment and the execution of his almighty pleasure. Consequently nature as an entire, and as constituted of an infinite number of details, becomes of itself subject to the immediate control of its sovereign Lord, and He can accordingly change, alter, or subvert it, if his designs require such change. Indeed were miraculous power claimed by any other than the Creator, we might freely say that it would be an impossibility; because a miracle is contrary to the course of nature, or that suprising system of organization established by the Supreme Wisdom. But when the Creator himself comes to instruct, to govern, to restrain, to control, to reward, to punish,—what, we ask, is to prevent Him from working a miracle? Ay, He changes nature! but is the new arrangement any thing more wonderful than the ordinary course of events? When there was darkness upon the face of the deep, and the Lord spoke, "Let there be light:" was the instantaneous burst of the flood of brilliancy which rejoiced the face of creation, till then buried beneath ages of gloom and desolation, any less wonderful than the change of the waters of Egypt's river into stagnant blood? or the sudden burst of hail, rain, and fire which whelmed that hapless country with despair and dread because of the sin of its ruler and inhabitants?—Some indeed have of late years endeavoured to render the Bible more credible, by explaining all, or nearly all, the miracles recorded there by the ordinary laws of nature. In this they certainly do not act wisely, and scarcely honestly. The Bible claims for God the power of doing what He deems best; it teaches that He empowered men, acting under his special guidance, to work astonishing things at different periods of the history of the world; it tells us as facts that such events did happen: and it is therefore not proper that we at this late day should attempt to do away with the evident meaning of Scripture, by substituting our own fancies in its stead. It is certainly true that in several instances the miracles are within the range of the laws of nature; for instance, the locusts which devoured every thing in Egypt, the destruction by a sort of earthquake of Korah and his fellow-conspirators; but in all cases we shall see that it is not so much the event as the promptness of the occurrence, which is dwelt upon as a sign or evidence of the truth of that which it was intended to verify. It does not derogate from the dignity of the Lord, that He called in the aid of nature as it is already constituted, as little as He is restrained by the non-existence of the thing He wishes to produce, which his creative power has to summon into being, before his will can be accomplished.

We are too apt to think of the immaculate Sovereign as we would think of a mortal; in using the terms wonderful—impossible,—we fancy that we have expressed something too great for every being, the Supreme no less than ourselves. But when we say that any thing is impossible for us, we only say that, with our present capacities and powers, we cannot accomplish the act mentioned; but this does not say, that another is equally weak with ourselves, or that we also, with an increase of energy, proceeding from any source, either by the march of discovery, or an augmented experience elaborated by our own mind, might not be able to accomplish the thing conceived impossible.—Now grant even that not one miracle in the Bible should ever be within the scope of human possibility, it does not restrict in the least its being done by divine possibility. The acts of God are not limited by our will, nor restrained by our power; it is enough that He wishes to do strange things, and they are done. He created the sea and the dry land; and when He means to let the waters flow over delightful valleys and fruitful mountains, or to convert the ocean into fertile fields, the change must take place, and desolation speeds onward at his nod, or prosperity hastens hither by the King's command. The word "impossibility" is not applicable to the Deity; whatever exists is in being through his sufferance only, and it is only existing because He has made it as it is. When now He finds it consonant with his wisdom, of which fact He is the sole judge, He can so change nature for the time being as to produce the intended effect, or He can work counter to the ordinary course of events without deranging the same. Every source of events, and every thought in the moral, with every cause in the material world, are alike within his view and knowledge; consequently He can arrange events in one spot of the creation without in the least affecting the other parts. So then, if a miracle be confessedly a breach of the laws of nature, it is a breach produced by the great Architect himself, who, whilst effecting it, has the mastery over all nature, so as not to injure or derange the other portions, nor to break up the harmony which governs every sphere in the most distant orbit.

It is said by some who, while professing an intimate knowledge of the laws of nature, doubt the truth of the Bible history, that the occurrence of a miracle would subvert the course of nature, and that consequently God would not, if He could, permit any such to take place.—But such an objection has no force, if we carefully consider what we have advanced already. Were it that God, having once fixed certain laws for the government of the universe, had retired, to use a human phrase, from the active rule of things, and left it altogether to these unalterable laws of his own institution: then indeed might it be said that He would not suffer any miracle to occur, for fear of disturbing the universal harmony of creation.—Yet both reason and religion teach us a different idea of the Supreme; He not alone founded the structure of the universe, but continues to superintend it by his wisdom and direct overruling providence; He is not wearied with watching, nor fatigued by his exertions; He is not overtasked in his labours, nor inadequate to the part which He has assumed; He is the same as from the beginning, and knows not sleep nor slumber, and might, wisdom, and goodness are yet his characteristics as in the days of old. Now imagine a case where a great event is yet buried deep in the recesses of time; the welfare of a large portion of sentient beings, either on our globe or in one of the many other worlds which compose our Master's kingdom, should require a chain of events to bring the desired occurrence to pass; and imagine farther that the ordinary course of things would be inadequate to bring it forth at all, or not with sufficient rapidity and effectiveness:—we would ask, why should the Lord *not* abrogate for the time the laws of nature, and make himself manifest as the Ruler of events by the occurrence of an astounding thing, one beyond the laws of nature to accomplish? We have already proved that to God there is nothing impossible; and his having left nature endued with such harmonious laws only places it beyond the power of creatures to arrest, alter, or destroy it in the smallest particular; but to the Maker himself it must be evidently as easy to act counter to his own institutions, if He desires it, as it was, in the first instance, to institute those laws of wonderful harmony, to which the thousands of suns, with their millions of planets; to which on earth all the minerals, all the mountains, all the valleys;—all the plants with their immense variety of flowers and fruits;—all the animals, they who range the forest, and they who live in peace with man and are obedient to his word; the birds that sing amid the leafy branches, and the fishes that sport in the sea;—all mankind, from the sage whose lips drop the honey of wisdom, to the nursling in its mother's arms, bow in silent submission, acknowledging all their Maker's power.

Already, in the early part of the history of man, we find an instance of unbelief recorded in one from whom such ought not to have been looked for. I allude to the announcement to Sarah, that at the expiration of a year she should be the happy mother of a son, with whom the Lord would establish his covenant. She affected to consider the fulfilment impossible, having reached the age of nearly ninety in her childless state. But the Lord reproved Abraham for the unbelief of his wife, in these words: "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, when I am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed, I will return unto thee, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." (Gen. xviii. 13, 14.) This occurrence will serve us as an illustration for many other miracles. All that was needed to accomplish the prediction was to restore the youth of Sarah, which she thought unlikely to occur. But from the child with which God meant to bless Abraham, it was intended to raise up a people that should become the light of the world; moreover it was deemed necessary that its mother too should be one who had a due knowledge of divine things, fittingly to educate the son who should become the successor to the covenant of Abraham with God. However the superficial may view the subject, it has had the most important bearing upon man, that Abraham and his son Isaac were true worshippers in the time of general idolatry. Hence the birth of Isaac was thought worthy to be attended by a miracle, in order to signalize more emphatically the sacred calling for which he was destined, to transmit the blessing of true religion to the latest descendants of Adam.

Now let us go down in our inquiries to later generations, and we will be surprised at the actually small number of prodigies recorded in the Bible. Were it then that this book should not be a true record, the authors thereof would have introduced necessarily many attestations of their truth, and would thus have recorded many wonders as proofs of their authenticity, if they once had claimed them to be within the range of divine economy. But from the time of Noah to the mission of Moses there are but few indications of supernatural occurrences, with the exception of the confusion of tongues, the destruction of Sodom, and the manifestation of prophecy to various pious persons. When, however, we come to the time of the redemption of Israel, we see a more evident display of the divine power before the eyes of mankind. Why is this?—Let us attempt an answer. The promise, which had been given when the birth of Isaac was first announced, had now ripened to a fulfilment. The descendants of Abraham had increased, though in servitude, and become a numerous nation, distinct and separate, despite of their being the fellow-countrymen of a people of a different origin and a peculiar mode of thinking.—But the promise of the Lord had to be fulfilled, since He is the God of truth, in whom there is no deception: yet He found his people oppressed, slaves to those who regarded not his name, nor feared his power. How then, we ask, was the promise to be kept? Should the Lord, by his almighty influence, so work upon the heart of the king of Egypt and his people as to cause the liberation of Israel, without their having any outward cause to discover the potency of Him who had thus influenced them? or should there be such manifestation of divine might that, though unwilling, the oppressors would have to acknowledge that the Creator was too mighty for mortals, exalted above the strength of man and the idols which he had made for his worship?—Either action would have been a miracle; the first, though inward, no less wonderful than the second;

for man is too tenacious of power, too greedy for his own interest, ever to relinquish his hold from a free accord upon the rights of others, especially if, as was the case in Egypt, the governing class thought themselves far superior to those they held in bondage. Yet if this inward influence alone had been exerted, the effect would have been only very transient upon the minds of the Egyptians, and quite unfelt by the Israelites, despite of their being thus the recipients of the Lord's bounty; they would have ascribed their freedom to an act of grace on the part of their masters, and would probably have little valued a boon so easily obtained. But the course indicated in the Bible was decidedly more calculated to produce a lasting effect, and one much more likely to reduce such a man as the arbitrary king of Egypt to obedience. He was told that the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, demanded of him to let his people go free. He answered insolently: "I know not the Lord, and also Israel I will not dismiss." It was then that the Most High deemed it necessary to show the manifestation of his power which we find narrated in the first chapters of Exodus, till Pharaoh was compelled to acknowledge the omnipotence of the Protector of Abraham's sons. During the time that these miracles transpired, there was no cessation of the powers of nature, except as it regarded the bodies of the Egyptians themselves; for to Israelites there was neither the plague of the pestilence, nor injury from the wild beasts, nor death from the hailstones, nor darkness in their dwellings; but all the afflictions were special creations to warn and punish those whom it was necessary thus to reduce to obedience to the divine commands. This will explain to us the first two verses of the tenth chapter of Exodus, which speak as follows:

ויאמר ה׳ אל משה בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי
את לבו ואת לב עבדיו למען שתי אתתי אלה בקרבו :
ולמען תספר באזני בנך ובן בנך את אשר התעללתי
במצרים ואת אתתי אשר שמתי בם וידעתם כי אני
ה׳ : שמות י׳ א׳ ב׳ :

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh; for I have caused to be heavy his heart and the heart of his servants, for the sake that I might do these my signs in the midst of them. And for the sake that thou mightest tell in the ears of thy son and of thy son's son that which I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

We have explained on a former occasion what is to be understood by the word hardening or making heavy the heart of Pharaoh, and stated it to be nothing else than what we see every day among sinful men, who do not open their souls to divine admonition, and remain callous to the wrathful dispensations, which others around them consider as sufficient to open their eyes to the erroneousness and evil of their course. We then stated that the Lord must not be supposed as active in preventing Pharaoh's repentance, but as not compelling him to pay obedience before the chain of events had produced the necessary conviction on his mind. We have now merely to apply the miraculous part to our to-day's discussion. It has been stated before that, like their masters, the Israelites had learned to pay divine honours to idols; witness the many murmurings mentioned during their travels in the wilderness. Now let us not forget what we have insisted on in several previous lectures, that the ultimate salvation of all mankind was to be brought about by the education of the seed of Abraham as the Lord's peculiar people. They had therefore need to be purified of their reverence for the superstitions of Egypt, no less than to be cautioned against the pernicious practices unblushingly perpetrated in that unhappy land, which, amid a high state of civilization, was prostrated beneath the sway of idolatrous priests, the coadjutors of despotism, who enslaved the minds as much, as the sovereigns did the bodies of the people. But when the Israelites beheld the destruction which reached alike the people, the king, the priests, and their idols, they could not help feeling that the power of the God, who humbled all that were held up to them as objects of reverence, must be vast, infinite, immeasurable; that He who arrested nature at his mere word, who made the winds his messengers, and the flaming fire his servants; who covered the heavens with darkness, and sent the angel of death unerringly into every house to slay the oldest of every family, from the prince down to the captive slave, must in truth be the Lord, the Creator, the Sovereign of the universe, He who builds up and destroys, who revives and slays, and that there is no one to snatch or save from his hands. This it was that should be told to the descendants of Israel, namely, that their God is the Most High, who abideth unto everlasting, unchangingly holy, wise, and pure, great beyond human conception, all-powerful in the execution of his will, cognizant of nature, and changing its laws whenever He wills a change to take place;

but who is true to his word, to repay the obedience of the fathers unto their children, and who is ever at hand to hear the prayer of the oppressed, and to save the weak and humble from the power of him who is stronger than they are; who is the God of truth, in whom there is no evil, no falsehood, who shields from the arrows of life all those who put their trust in Him!

Be it now thy will, O our Father and God! to open our eyes unto the knowledge of thy ways, and fill us with understanding to study with humility the word of salvation which thy wisdom has written down for our instruction; subdue in us the pride of human reason which refuses to be taught by thy word, and cause thy law to be engraven on our hearts, that we may observe its precepts, and speak of the great deeds Thou hast wrought for us, and through us for all the world, to those who are to come after us. Let thus thy name be sanctified through our humble efforts, and let us feel the assurance that Thou art with us whenever we assemble in this house, which we have built unto thy glory, to offer up our prayer at the foot of thy mercy-seat, and to proclaim aloud our abiding trust in the truth of thy law which Thou hast imparted to us, as the best heritage of the congregation of Jacob thy servant.—May this be ever thy will, and may thy abundant blessing be poured out over all Israel thy people! Amen.

Shebat 5. } 5603.
Jan'y 6. }

DISCOURSE XIX.

ON MIRACLES.

No. II.

How glorious, O Lord! is thy testimony; how exalted the truth which Thou hast revealed to us! All the works of man have crumbled before thy messenger of decay, the flight of time over this changeable world; and empires no less than moral systems have one by one yielded to those which came springing up after them in the march of events. But thy word and thy law have stood unmoved, firm as the Source from which they have sprung; fresh and youthful amidst the hoariness and decay which have overwhelmed all else besides. Be it therefore thy will to let this great truth be deeply impressed upon our minds, that we may make it the foundation of our life, and the sure support of our hopes of a happy future. In order that our souls, redeemed from the jaws of perdition, in which sink they who are strangers to thy ways, may sing thy praises for everlasting, O, Eternal One, our God! Amen.

Brethren!

In the course of the inquiry which we lately instituted into the doctrines of the Jewish religion, we stated, that we must admit as one of them the possibility for God to work his will in whatever He pleases, though to do this, He should necessarily have to act against the usual course of nature. We also stated, that nature herself is a miracle, or an effect of God's will, to produce which nothing impelled Him but his own pleasure; and that therefore it requires no greater creative powers to introduce temporary changes or permanent alterations in the regular course of things, than to institute the same in the first instance. That God is the Creator, admits of no doubt, or else He would and could be no object of adoration. That God is the Preserver of things, follows from the very nature of the terms, or else there must be a second, to whom would in that case be transferred the preservation of the universe, who, however, would of necessity have to be independent of the Creator; for if the preserving power were not independent, God the Creator would be, what He is in truth, the Preserver as well as the Creator; and we have already shown, that the harmony everywhere observable, and the perfect accordance of cause and effect, in the material world no less than in the history of the mind, as far as this can be elucidated in the affairs of mankind, tend to prove that there is but one will, one spirit; hence there must be but one power, one ruler, and there can be no second, independent, coëxisting being to share, much less to dispute, the superintendence and government of all objects and things that have their existence by the Supreme Creator's will. This will give us, then, what we claimed for God—the perfect and absolute power to do whatever He deems best, without any control or hindrance, not only from any extraneous power, but from the laws of organization as by Him instituted; inasmuch as they are depending upon his gracious pleasure for their continuance in existence, but are by no means necessary to his happiness, nor can they contribute the smallest item to his greatness and power, farther than to prove to the sentient beings whom He has formed, that He is in truth the Lord of lords and the King of kings, the Creator of all spirits, and the Author of all that is in the heavens above, on the earth below, and in the waters beneath the earth.

In the instance of a skilful mechanician who has contrived a cunningly devised fabric, with the joints, screws, levers, and wheels of which he is necessarily perfectly acquainted, we will readily believe that he may be able to introduce some alteration which, so far from injuring the machine, will render it more simple and effective; because we must admit that the one who has produced a thing so lifelike and wonderful is thereby not prevented from carrying the fruits of his invention yet farther into the regions of discovery, which are totally inaccessible to ordinary minds. It would not be considered a mark of wisdom in any one to say, that he did not believe the artist could alter his machine, because there appeared to him no reason for this alteration, and because he conceived that it was as perfect as it could be; for, admitting the objection to be true, still that does not abridge the power of the master to do with his handiwork what he may think best, and to alter it in any manner he may deem fitting in his superior experience and knowledge. Now extend this simple position to the Supreme Architect, who not only shaped the world, but created it from nothing; who not only works with pre-existing materials, but also calls them into being; who is not only endowed with inventive faculties which proceed from a superior source, as man is, but who is himself the Source of wisdom and understanding. And of Him shall it be said that his power is so circumscribed by his own rules, that it is impossible that such a change should be wrought by Him in the magnificent fabric which his wisdom has built? The perfection of nature merely proves the greater perfection of its Creator,—not that He is unable to construct a better one, one yet more wonderful, more free from evil, more allied in purity to his own pure essence. And what does his holy Word teach us? Simply this, that step by step He organized nature, and gradually perfected what He had made. At first He spoke, and matter started forth in a vast expanse, of which the human mind cannot conceive the end. It was yet rude and unformed, for the will was merely to create a mass of things elements, vast powers, terrific in strength, but as yet unorganized, without determined individuality. Again He spoke, and globes separated in wonderful array in the different regions of space, revolving each around a centre, all obedient to one directing will; but there was no life, no light, no verdure, in all their extent. Again He spoke, and there was light, springing from his own mighty being, to illumine and to rejoice the face of nature; and from then until now, there was evening and there was morning in each sphere, according to its own proper position in God's world, and the blessing of light has not been withheld in its due season from the many globes that thirst for its presence. Again the word went forth, and the atmosphere of life-sustaining air was cast around our world at least, and no doubt round many another likewise, to become the sustainer of animated beings that were to dwell upon the same thereafter; and from the beginning till now, the mixture of respirable gases has been so nicely balanced, so scattered far and wide without stint or scanty measure, that every spot has always been supplied with a due portion for all that dwell there; and this stream has always been everywhere of the same healthy proportions, unless disturbed by causes for which nature, as such, cannot be considered responsible. Scarcely were light and air provided, when a separation of the elements took place: the aqueous parts were collected into vast receivers, and formed oceans, lakes, and rivers; whilst the solid parts stood forth, as mountains that pierce the clouds, as sloping hills, as pleasant valleys, as rolling plains, and as shelving beaches. And then suddenly sprung forth, from the soil fitted for culture, many thousand herbs, plants, and trees, bearing fruit and seed, all calculated to subserve the use of creatures of a higher order, to be thereafter created, and all adapted by various wonderful contrivances to propagate their species, some by seeds, some by layers, some by roots, and some by other methods, known best and most admired and most dwelt upon with rapture by those who have penetrated into the mysteries of the great book of knowledge, which nature everywhere unfolds. The orbs next, which are capable of illuminating by the light which radiates from them, were assigned to dispense their invaluable treasures to the bodies which are opaque in their substance, and which therefore need to receive this precious gift from others more blessed than themselves.

Now behold the new creation standing bright in its Maker's presence; the brilliant sun flies on in his course, sending forth rays of glorious effulgence to gladden and to fructify the kingdoms assigned to him by his Creator; and beneath his influence stand erect the lofty cedars on Lebanon, waving to and fro their gloomy tops, as the invisible spirit of the wind passes through them on his mysterious message to purify the heated atmosphere; see in the valleys, how brightly, glowingly, stands the blushing rose, or the snow-white lily, or lies concealed amid the verdant turf the modest violet, or scents the gale the cinnamon tree in the farther India, or spreads over the rosy sea the fragrant breath of the sweet shrubs of the happy Araby, or smiles the perfumed carnation in the fair fields of Asia; whilst the gaudy peony, the coral honeysuckle, the tinted pansy, or the simple daisy, each contribute to deck the landscape with an additional trait of loveliness. Behold in yon wide plain the mellow sea of ripening corn, bending in graceful waves to the gentle breeze which sways them like the billows of the yielding ocean; and the blushing fruits concealed almost under the dark-green leaves which shade them from the heat of the midday sun; and listen to the dull, gentle heaving of the sea, as it dashes against the newly-formed strand, gifted with fearful power when it rises into wrathful spray urged by the stormy blast, but now playful, placid, bright, harmless, like an infant giant unconscious of his strength. And lo! when the sun has set, how sweetly beam the hosts of stars in their new state of innocence, and shines the silvery moon sailing in her own deep blue heaven, the image of purity and truth:—and say, is not the scene beautiful, soothing, enchanting in the extreme? And yet there is no life, nothing—nothing—that moves of a free accord from the spot on which it stands. Nevertheless, the creation is thus far finished; there is organization, and there are laws; there are causes implanted in nature which must produce their effects; and consequently there is a species of perfection already attained, and there are beings who feel the impulse of their Maker's will. But say, were God's powers exhausted when He had proceeded thus far? was He withheld from doing more, as soon as the suns, the planets, the elementary powers, the light, the atmosphere, the sea, the land, and vegetation had been finished? or was it a reasonable objection to his farther action, that enough had been done, and wisely done? Both investigation into nature and the history of Holy Writ teach us quite another lesson; for as soon as the earth had become fitted for the habitation of a different order of beings, they were called forth to the light of day, and soon the voiceless forests were filled with the song of many a feathered minstrel; birds of gay plumage flitted among the groves of the sunny south; the gaudy parrot chatted amid the branches of the orange and the palm; and the changeable humming-bird sipped the honey from the open flowers which invited his restless wings to hover over them; and the merry water-fowls sailed majestically down the northern rivers, whilst the shores resounded with the sweet voice of the dusky nightingale. In the seas was placed the mighty whale, who sported mirthfully and fearlessly on the face of the deep, whilst he lashed into spray the dark-green waters assigned to him for his habitation; the rivers were alive with the children of the finny tribes, which rejoiced as they glided swiftly, undisturbed in the element which sustains their life and gives them shelter. Insects, too, in myriads, dashed along on busy wings, reflecting the brilliant light in their many gaudy colours, and sought from the inward call of nature the home which was provided for each in the bosom of the earth, on the face of the waters, or the many fruit-trees, shrubs, and flowers which every where stood ready for their reception.

But there were yet wanting some more beings, that, uniting more energy than falls to the lot of insects, birds, and fishes, should have their habitation on the face of the earth itself.—Again stood the glory of God anew revealed in the many beautiful creatures, that sprung at his creative word into life and being. They too sought out the homes which were suited to each, where best their natural development could be carried to the utmost perfection, where a due portion of heat, and the proper sustenance were provided by the bountiful hand of their Creator. The arid fields of Africa beheld the tawny lion and the lioness watching with anxious care and fearful strength their tender young. The sagacious elephant reared his towering form amid the deep shady woods of the tropical land, secure and careless because of the might of his limbs and the invincible power which had been imparted to his matchless frame. The spotted tiger and the beautiful leopard ranged the forests and jungles of the Eastern countries, whilst the graceful gazelle and the swift-footed deer fled with unapproachable speed over the extended plains. Here behold the heavy hippopotamus, dividing the flood of the sparkling Ganges, or the torrents of the river of Egypt, whilst on the shores of many streams grazed the peaceful ox, and lowed in the green pasture the useful cow, regarding with maternal solicitude her newborn calf. In the sands of Arabia you might see the prancing steed rushing on with resistless speed, and pawing the soil, that you would fancy the earth to shake beneath; there ranged the wild ass, hurrying on in his wild career, free and untrammelled as the air he snuffed in with his extended nostrils; there, too, browsed on the hardy shrubs of the desert the patient camel, regardless alike, by his habits of abstinence and power of endurance, the gnawings of hunger and the burning of thirst. On the grassy plains skipped joyfully the harmless sheep, and the horned goat, and over the Alpine precipices wended their way the daring chamois as they leaped from crag to crag in their unapproachable solitude, whither naught ascends but the strong-winged eagle or the mighty condor. And there where the cold offered a fitting habitation, stalked abroad the shaggy bear, or showed itself the stately reindeer; every where was life;—every where stood before the light of the sun the beautiful works of the great Creator.—If we thus view the Lord as the Author of the earth only, we shall find cause enough to admire his power and his infinite ability to work his will, seeing that the effects produced thereby are so varied and surprising in their organization. But this is not all: the system of nature in which we live is of immense extent; no man has yet measured its greatness, no man will ever understand its astonishing structure. And wherever there is any part of God's creation, and this is all that our imagination can grasp, there must be the same tokens of power and goodness which are discoverable on earth; for knowing as we do how good the Almighty is to the inhabitants of the terrestrial globe, we cannot imagine that there should be so many worlds which we can see nightly with our eyes, revolving in the immensity of space the end of which we cannot discover, existing uselessly, surrendered to dreary desolation, without atmosphere, vegetation, and life. But if it even were so, that all else in creation but our own earth were desolate and dreary, there would still be enough to satisfy the most incredulous mind of the ability of God to work his will in all He desires. Look at the various countries which chequer the face of the globe; examine the variety of climates, and temperatures, and vegetables, and animals which are assigned to each; reflect on the peculiarities of the ocean-breeze which renders the tropical sea-coasts habitable to the white race of man, and the brilliant northern or southern lights which illumine and break the dreariness of the winter in the higher latitudes. Consider also the peculiar adaptedness of the polar animals to live readily in rigorous climates, by the additional coat of thick white fur which every year defends them against the cold of the frozen season, or the instinct which teaches others to hide in a living state of suspended animation in the depth of caverns, or in hollow trees, or in sandy banks where they pass away the months when ice and snow cover the ground, in a happy forgetfulness of the storm which rages without, and which would prove fatal to their existence. Then turn to the astonishing organization of the different human races, who are all best calculated by their physical, and not unfrequently by their mental developments, for the very countries where we find them placed in a state of nature. Moreover, reflect upon this peculiar fact, that a race originally living in one sort of climate, is materially changed in one or two generations if transplanted to one of a different degree of heat, so as to render it in a great degree better adapted to bear the especial hardships which it has to encounter in its new home. Nay, more, let us ponder upon the astonishing truth, that the same man when quitting his own country for one at a distance from his own often becomes acclimated, and in a manner physically changed, in order to render him a fit inhabitant of the place which he has chosen for his residence:—consider all these facts, and you must acknowledge that there is enough on this earth to make you stand astonished at the power of the Creator. For there is evidence of design and forethought in all this; the very exceptions we meet with to these general rules, prove that *nature* as an inert uniform agent cannot cause them, or else there could be no exceptions; but the exertions of a Power so eminently beneficent, so nearly universally uniform in its working, demonstrates it to be one of intelligence, and of living, active, all-pervading wisdom, which is not limited in its strength, not defined by any outward agency.

But we are leaving our subject. We wanted to portray merely the wisdom and power of God as displayed in his creation, and to exhibit Him as working miracles in every thing which meets our view. We stated that the creation was a miracle, and we may freely rest satisfied with the rapid view we have taken of its origin and its causes.—At every step in advance which *nature* took under the creative commands of the Lord, He might have restricted it and rested, if so it had pleased his wisdom; He needed not to have added one more miracle to those already wrought before; but He willed it otherwise; and as the world was more blessed with creatures of beauty, power, and usefulness, at each successive period of the formation of the universe, his wisdom, his glory, his goodness, his might, were rendered more evident for the intelligent beings whom He designed to frame, as the crowning work of his creation.—We traced the earth as divided into sea and land; as surrounded with an atmosphere of living air, as illuminated and warmed by mighty worlds which shine by day or appear at night; we beheld it decked with plants of a thousand different kinds; we saw it peopled with many living things which have their home in the air, on the land, or in the water; but there was yet no animal so like the divine majesty of the Author of all, as to utter its thoughts in words, to reflect in a continuous train of reasoning, to feel the weight of responsibility, and to choose from free reasoning between good and evil.—The thought to create such a one ascended, if we may so express ourselves, before the Lord; and straightway the thought became will; the will went forth into the creative word; the dust, of the earth assumed the shape of the human form; the breath of divine life was breathed into the mortal clay, and man stood there a creature of the earth, fired by a soul of unending endurance, whilst nature holds sway, whilst the existence of the universe is suffered to continue by the will of its Maker. How wonderful is this creature! how fearfully great is this body of ours!

how surprisingly sublime the soul which lives within us! Well might David exclaim, when feeling the great power of the Lord as displayed in his works, and especially in the formation of the human body: "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." (Psalm cxxxix. 14.) In truth, the more you investigate the various combinations of bones, of muscles, of veins, of ligatures, of sinews, of channels, of viscera, of fluids composing the human body: the more will you be surprised at the extraordinary adaptation of each part to the ends of its formation; and it is not an ignoble study to trace the developments and uses of every particular part of our body, especially if the student rises from his investigation with a deeper reverence for his God, with a profounder humility for his Creator. Men of research have argued from the economy of animal life the existence of design in the creation; they have proved that so wonderful a mechanism could not, by any possibility, be the effect of chance; and truly is it so! if the beautiful flower displays in its shape, its colour, its odour, the undeniable goodness of God, the animal frame no less demands of us to acknowledge, that He who so contrived each part to answer in the best manner the object for which it was required, who repeats the same arrangement in so many millions of creatures from age to age, from generation to generation, cannot be otherwise than wise and intelligent, able to work his will, and designing all He does for a special and useful object.

So much with regard to the body. But is the soul less wonderful? No, no! it is this which constitutes the essence of man, which gives him dominion over the other creatures. Regard well the gradual development of the mind of an infant, and the instinct of the inferior animals: and how surprisingly great will the difference strike you! The animal soon reaches the full growth of its body, and equally speedily all the few attainments which are within its grasp. But the human infant grows slowly, and as slowly does its intellect increase in intensity and comprehensiveness; it has much to learn, and therefore the age of childhood is long continued, that it may not be diverted by the cares of seeking a livelihood which fall to the share of brutes, from attending to its mental cultivation. There may appear, at first sight, some degree of hardship in this state of feebleness; but it leads to the great results which every where appear to demonstrate, that subordination, obedience, and gratitude, are the means of government which the Lord designs for the world. It is thus that the weakness of the child renders it necessarily subordinate to its parents; it next is the source of the child's obedience to the wholesome counsels of its wise benefactors and progenitors, and at length influences it with feelings of gratitude for the many favours conferred unceasingly and uncomplainingly, and induces it to follow now willingly from a free choice, the lessons of wisdom which it has learned in early infancy. In this manner we shall discover by a careful inquiry that, provided the mind be not too overtasked at the very outset, and that our research be confined within the ample bounds which God has set for its exercise, man can acquire an astonishing number of facts and ideas; and not alone this, but he can enlarge upon what he has received, and add greatly to the general stock of knowledge by the elucidation of new truths, and the careful analysis of previously known ideas in almost every branch of knowledge. It is barely necessary to advert to the power of speech, which so surprisingly marks the human species, whereby one communicates the nicest shades of thoughts which agitate him to the comprehension of others; or to the faculty of informing one another by written characters of things done in the absence of those we wish to instruct, and by which we know what has passed in former ages, and by means of which we treasure up our thoughts for future generations. All these are powers peculiarly appertaining to mind, wherein matter, as far as we understand it, can exercise but little if any agency, any farther than a corrupt and diseased body is a fit instrument for the soul to effect therewith its objects and purposes.

It will thus be seen that, as we view each successive act of the Creator, from the formation of the rude mass of the material world to the communicating of spirit to man, we must come to the conclusion that his ability to work his will is unlimited in extent, and unconfined to any period of time; seeing that in every epoch of creation, whether this mighty event lasted six days only, as the simple words of the Bible would seem to indicate, or whether it lasted for many centuries, as the philosophers assert, and which is not altogether contradicted by Scripture, his power was exercised to add to creatures already existing others equally or more wonderful, and all proceeding, as their predecessors had done before, from his will solely, without there being the least force, necessity, or inducement from any other source whatever to influence his will, or to urge on his action.

When therefore the whole earth had been finished, and it was peopled in every part thereof with things of life, things of growth, and those which are not increasing as animals and plants do; when man had been placed there to rule over every thing beneath him in the scale of being: the miraculous power of the Lord did not thereby cease and become extinct. On the contrary, we would derogate from his dignity, deny his omnipotence, even doubt of his being, were we to assert that, with the creation of the material world, the whole of God's will was accomplished. No, He is yet almighty, and will continue to be so to the end of all creation; and when every thing shall have ceased to be, if so this be his ultimate will, then will He yet be, without all this wonderful organization, King, God, Almighty, able to reproduce the same or another world, as soon as He deems it best to do so. Upon this we rest our belief in the truth of miracles. With the formation of Adam, the work of creating was not complete. True, the material world had received an organization, which, for all that we know, may be final; but the spirit was yet to progress, just as the soul of a child advances under the guidance of parents and teachers. But the teacher of the world needs to be the Lord himself, who must himself instruct, and educate, and correct the works of his hands. We, therefore, are satisfied that He has actually left the world at large in a state of infancy, and from age to age He permits improvements and new developments to take place which were unknown before that time. And are these discoveries not in a measure wonderful, even somewhat miraculous, when we consider the immense influence they have from time to time upon the whole framework of society at large? It was, therefore, that, when the world had so far progressed as to be ready in a small degree for the reception of the law which God had ordained from the beginning (for we maintain that every principle of the moral law was, from the necessity of the case, always unalterably fixed in the mind of the Lord), He revealed himself by new creations, by changing things already existing, by infusing new powers into objects otherwise inert or inefficient, to demonstrate his almighty power, and to effect his unalterable will, to teach mankind the truth of his omnipotence, and to induce them to look upon Him with hope and confidence. So was the rod of Moses no more in itself than another branch of a tree on which man leans for support. But wielded by the prophet in obedience to the command of God, it assumed the shape of a devouring serpent, it converted the waters of the Nile into blood, it changed the dust of the earth into noxious vermin, it produced hail and thunder in Egypt, it divided the sea for the passage of the Israelites, it brought forth water from the flinty rock, and at length was sanctified by a repetition of the same event in the last year of the seër's life. All this was done, all the miracles exhibited during that fruitful period of great events were performed, that the world might become prepared through Israel, the children of Abraham, for the reception of the law of God. This important step in the gradual progress of the human mind required a powerful impulse; and this is the best explained in the miracles recorded as having been wrought to bring this truth home to the people of Israel, that the law they were to receive must indeed be the veritable gift of the Lord, seeing that He alone could effect the acts, contrary to the course of nature, which occurred before their eyes. Does any one of you believe that it was a mere idle parade of wonderful power which was the object of the miracles? He would certainly be in error; for we find explicitly stated in the first appearance of the divine prophecy to Moses, as the result of all that he saw: "And this shall be the sign unto thee that I have sent thee, when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." (Exodus iii. 12.) This evidently means that all the miracles would be as naught, were it not for the public proclamation of the law, which had already for centuries been inscribed in the presence of God, as the Rabbins figuratively say, with black upon white fire, so pure are its words, so sacred its ordinances! as a gift of the Lord to the children of man.

We will therefore maintain that the miracles were necessary accompaniments of this wonderful exhibition; it was the creation of a new mind, the divine wisdom of the law, which the Lord purposed; and this event, in itself as wonderful as the formation of the universe, in fact, itself a suspension of the law of nature, since mortals became cognizant in a direct manner of the intentions of God, which is unattainable in the ordinary course of events, was preceded, accompanied, followed by the works of nature feeling likewise the presence of the Supreme, more immediately than at other periods of history.—Was the object worthy of this divine manifestation?—Yes, truly it was; God meant to teach the world, and his works became terrified, to use the Bible phrase, at his presence, the laws of nature relaxed in their hold, when the Sovereign himself assumed the rule in his glory and might. And so sings Assaph, the man who knew the service of the Lord, and spoke forth his thoughts from a worshipping heart:

אלהים בקדש דרכך מי אל גדול כאלהים : אתה
האל עשה פלא הודעת בעמים עזך : גאלת בזרוע
עמך בני יעקב ויוסף סלה : ראוך מים אלהים ראוך
מים יחילו אף ירגזו תהמות : תהלים עו' יד'-יז' :

"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, what god is so great as God? Thou art the God that doest wonders, thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast redeemed with thy arm thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph—Selah.—The waters saw thee, O God! the waters saw thee: they were afraid; also the depths were troubled." Psalm lxxvi.; 14–17.

Without a public manifestation of the Lord, the world would not have accepted the law, notwithstanding its truth and holiness; the miracles were, therefore, the most natural means to effect the great end of Providence. Well might the earth shake, lightnings play athwart the gloom, the thunder roll in terrific echoes along the crags of Sinai; well might the fire shoot heavenward from the peaceful Horeb's peak; well might nature stand affrighted at the awful Presence; for there were combined all the elements of power and grandeur. And truly the manifestation was not in vain; the miracles were indeed transient, for now Sinai sleeps quietly, a pasture for the flocks of the desert; the Red Sea admits not now the passage of a mighty host; the vision of the prophet no more enlightens the mind of Israel's sons. Yet the law remains, the desired creation of the light of the soul was effected, established forever, equally so with the grand chains of the Andes mountains, which stand as the frame of the earth, that she may never be moved. And if storms assail the holy legacy, if furious onsets of adversity threaten danger to its upholders: the fury will in vain exhaust itself, the danger will pass, and leave the troubled sky more serene, more unclouded than before. And though now the miracles have ceased among us, the time will come, when the farther developments of the will of the Lord will render again familiar his presence among us, when all the earth shall see that the word of the God of Jacob is true, abiding among us for ever.

Bless, O bless, our Father! thy children, as Thou hast blest their fathers who feared Thee; let thy countenance shine unto them, and fill their souls with the abundance of peace which is ever before Thee; and let thy light be their joy and support in every stage of their lives. And when adversity comes nigh unto their dwellings, do Thou, O Lord! interpose thy protecting hand, and cover with the panoply of thy shield those who seek refuge under the shadow of thy wings. May this be thy will. Amen.

Adar 3. } 5603.
Feb'y 3. }

DISCOURSE XX.

ON MIRACLES.

No. III.

Everlasting God, and eternal Father! accept, we beseech Thee, the humble offering of thanks which thy creatures offer up in thy presence. Non-existing without thy will, powerless without thy aid, what avail unto Thee our acts? what injury can result to Thee, O Most Holy, from our deeds? Yet Thou abidest in the hearts of the lowly and humble, as thy revealed word benignantly teaches, and Thou listenest with favour to the simple supplication which the lisping infant addresses unto Thee. Let it be, then, thy will to receive us also this day in favour and mercy, and let the abundance of the blessing of thy peace be poured out over us and all Israel, thy people. Amen!

Brethren!

We have in the preceding lectures shown that the unlimited power of God renders it possible for Him to exercise his pleasure without the least regard to that which in any but the Creator would be beset by insurmountable difficulties. Man, we stated, works with preëxisting materials: God produces the materials likewise. Man is bound within the limits of divine arrangement; he cannot displace the smallest particle of the immense system in which he exists, and of which he is a minutely small integral portion: whilst God is the Maker of this system, and has no one superior to himself to circumscribe his will within the limits of laws and space. A miracle, therefore, if it should not conflict with the designs of the Lord, or, rather, if He chooses to work one by his own immediate power, or suffer any spiritual or corporeal creature to effect the same, is within the range of possibility, and its having occurred is then rendered probable; or, in other words, we believe that it has occurred, if the evidence be sufficient to produce the conviction of its truth in our minds, or if the effect stated to have been brought about, and which we know from circumstances to have occurred, be such that ordinary every-day causes could have produced it but imperfectly, or not at all, as the case may be. We will now, therefore, define what the Bible calls פלא or a wonderful unnatural occurrence, that it seems to designate an effect produced by the power reserved to the Creator alone, to effect changes in the ordinary course of events, which take place to impress a certain truth or to work some powerful conviction upon the minds of intelligent beings, or at least to arrest their attention.—Let us consider the nature of man. He finds himself placed upon earth with an intellect vastly superior to every other creature around him. He soon feels this importance swelling high in his bosom, and straightway he thinks of schemes of aggrandizement, and perchance sees unlooked for success crown his efforts. Thoughts which were dear to him in an humbler sphere, in the days when his mind had not reached its great development, are now discarded as unfit for one so great in wealth, so renowned in wisdom; and he enters new paths of life, he invents new schemes of thoughts and feelings at variance with the early lessons of infancy. But just as an individual throws off the lessons of early years, just as prosperity and success induce him to regard himself as superior: so also are entire nations affected by the whisperings of pride which follow on the path of success and civilization; and with every step in advance, entire communities have at all times been found to regard with more or less contempt the ideas which were formerly* cherished as true and unanswerable, and have also introduced changes in their conduct which were far from improvements. With individuals so acting there are within the power of God the terrors of disease, of mental sufferings, of deprivation of wealth, of death of the beloved, to recall the wanderers to the path of righteousness, to remind them that their course is not one of wisdom, and to admonish them, whilst it is yet time, to retrace their evil steps. With nations, too, there are national punishments, which the Almighty wields to correct the crying evils which have been committed by an entire body politic; since He lets his voice be heard in the alarum of the war-trumpet; causes his might to be seen in the scanty yield of the fruits of the earth; in the raging pestilence, which slays its thousands and its ten thousands; and terrifies those who live in sinful security, by bidding the ground to heave beneath their feet, and reel to and fro like a man that is drunk with wine.

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* This fact has been conclusively proved by the radical changes in political ideas and measures since this was written, both in Europe and America. In fact, history is full of such examples.

We will not now inquire how much of truly miraculous power is directly displayed in all of these apparently natural occurrences; we will not now claim that the very periodical visits of war, of famine, and of pestilence, are such proofs that the Lord is superior to the laws of nature, which in themselves are unable to produce these results; but we will assume the position, that it may in the providence of God be necessary to produce an effect without resorting to terrible warnings, or to bless one part of a people whilst the other is punished. For instance, when the Israelites dwelt in Egypt, the scourge of the pestilence, by which an indiscriminate slaughter of all the inhabitants would, in the course of nature, have taken place, could not have answered as a retribution towards the oppressors, inasmuch as the oppressed would have shared the same fate. How then should the Lord act? As He did, by discriminating between the guilty and the innocent, by protecting these, while the others suffered. The miracle did not consist in the fact, that the plague was not a thing in the course of nature, but that it spared the property of the Israelites, whilst that of the Egyptians was surrendered to the destroyer. Now it cannot be denied that these astounding events happen frequently, that the power of the Lord is held out to protect those who deserve his mercy; but we pass them by; we discover nothing wonderful or extraordinary in them; and far from improving our minds, they leave us uninstructed and unwise. Since now one event, therefore, would have produced no sensible effect on the Egyptians in all probability, frequent repetitions of the lesson were requisite; till the obduracy of human reasoning had to yield to the overpowering conviction, that the demands of Moses were the veritable injunctions of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, who, by the deeds then and thus wrought, was pleased to demonstrate his almighty power, exerted, let it be understood, to preserve the truth of his promise, to break the chains of the unjustly enslaved, and to prove the universal truth, which was true from the beginning, and will be true to all eternity, that there is but one God, one Creator, one Saviour, who was, who is, and who ever will be; before whom no creative power existed, and after whom there will be none; and with whom there is neither an associate nor a delegate to share in the smallest degree the government of the universe. And these are the words of the Bible in reference to this subject: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. Go thee unto Pharaoh in the morning, and thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; and behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened. Thus saith the Lord, By this thou shalt know that I am the Lord, behold, I will smite with the rod which is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood." (Exod. vii. 14–17.) Again: "And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Assume glory over me, for what time I shall entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and from thy houses, that they may remain only in the river? And he said, For to-morrow; and he said, Be it according to thy word; in order that thou mayest know that there is none like unto our God." (Ibid. viii. 5, 6.) Farther: "And the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God." (Ibid. 15.) Again we read: "And I will distinguish on that day the land of Goshen, in which my people abideth, that no wild beasts shall be there, that thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth." (Ibid. 18.) In another passage we read: "But for this reason have I suffered thee to remain, in order to show thee my power; and in order that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Ibid. ix. 16.) It was then also that Pharaoh for a moment felt humbled, and he sent for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them: "I have sinned this time; the Lord is the righteous, and I and my people are the wicked." (Ibid. 27.) It is also said: "And I will pass through the land of Egypt in this night, and I will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment; I am the Lord." (Ibid. xii. 12.) These few brief extracts, which will be more amply confirmed by reading them in connexion with their contexts, give us at one view a clear understanding of the object of the miracles related to us as having been performed in Egypt, and it was, what we have always contended for, the fulfilment of the Lord's intention to establish one people on earth as the depositary of his laws, and to prove himself to be the sole Deity to whom worship is due from all creatures. We have before shown, that in the ordinary course of events, by the usual influence of human feelings, the king of Egypt could not have been induced to dismiss a multitude of slaves, who built his pyramids, erected his temples, dug his canals, laboured in his fields, and whose intelligence well fitted them for those works where something more than mere brute force was requisite for their execution. Should his benevolence have been appealed to, his cupidity would have checked the first dawning of kindness for the enslaved race. To an appeal for justice he would have answered, that they, who had been bondmen for centuries, had no claims to more than mere existence, which they were fortunate enough to receive as a bounty from his royal favour. If reminded of the desperation of men reduced to extremities, who, when willing to be free, might by one great effort break asunder their chains, and wreak their vengeance in rivers of blood upon their oppressors: he would have scorned the threat; have appealed to his hundreds of thousands of warriors, all ready to perish at his nod; have pointed to the many brave swords anxious to leap from their scabbards in defence of the sacred majesty of Egypt, and have exultingly asserted that they who had been so long slaves, and subjected to all manner of ill treatment, could not desire the boon of liberty, and would be unfit to use it becomingly, even should it be conceded to them from his undeserved bounty. And farther, had he been merely informed that it was a decree of a mighty Deity, who wished to protect the slavish race whom he valued so low, whom he regarded as outcasts from humanity: it cannot be otherwise than as the Bible teaches us, that he would not have regarded in the least such a demand, backed by what he must naturally have thought an unwarranted pretension to a divine prerogative, falsely assumed for the God in whose name he was appealed to, by the daring rebel who ventured to enter the royal palace with such unheard of audacity, with such a monstrous request, addressed to the highest monarchical power in the known world, in favour of the meanest slavish people. Here then was a case where discriminating justice could not send a universal, uniform punishment over the land, which, not merely that, without the intervention of the very miraculous power of which we have been speaking, it must have afflicted the Israelites equally with the Egyptians, would have assuredly been regarded by Pharaoh, his people, and his slaves also, as one of those terrible visitations which occasionally devastate the earth; and it would thus have entirely failed of being regarded as a warning, and consequently it could not have effected the liberation of Israel. Let us view the many calamitous occurrences of modern times; the terrible wars; the visitation of new pestilential diseases; the frightful conflagrations; the destructions by flood and storms; the general commercial bankruptcy which has destroyed the fortunes of thousands of families all over the earth, that thought themselves secure against the assaults of adversity,—let us, I say, view them in their proper light: are they not all manifestations of divine wrath? and yet who heeds the warning that is addressed thereby to all alike? does not every one think that they are but natural events, and have no bearing whatever upon the moral world?—Even should a preacher, in imitation of the ancient prophets, be bold enough to denounce the sins of the age, and apply these disasters to the case of his hearers, and tell them, "It is partly for your sins that the Lord has afflicted the land;

repent, that the divine wrath may be diverted from you; return to the ways of righteousness, lest you perish in your iniquity:"—who is there among us that would listen to the words of such a holy man? would we not look upon him as a mad enthusiast, who misapplies the ordinary events of life to a purpose for which they have no analogy? And yet modern times are in possession of a far greater knowledge of divine truths than were the Egyptians of olden days; especially are the sons of Israel more enlightened in the true knowledge of God's providence, and of his judgments, and of his mercies, inasmuch as they possess the key which opens for them the portals of true wisdom, namely, the holy law, the pure emanation of the most high God. And shall we believe that mere ordinary calamities could have softened Pharaoh's heart? could have taught his people to revere the everlasting Shield of Abraham? could have impressed upon the sons of Jacob that they must be holy to a God different from the deities their masters worshipped, when no such knowledge could have come to them in the way of nature, and when, moreover, they suffered from the same evils which befell their masters, arguing from the point that miracles are either impossible, or that the occasion did not call for their being performed?

I leave it to you, brethren, to answer for yourselves these questions, which, rejecting the possibility of miracles, would give replies which bear absurdity upon their very face. For if no miracles had been performed, no knowledge of a system different from Egyptian mythology could have suddenly dawned upon the Israelites; and even could such a thing have come into existence, it could never have caused Pharaoh to consent to the dismissal of sixty myriads of able-bodied slaves, as we have said already. The miracles, therefore, recorded in the book of Exodus (and these are the principal ones which the Bible contains, and are, perhaps, solely the foundations of doctrines of the Jewish church) were necessary, first to discriminate between those who deserved punishment and those who did not, whilst merely ordinary calamities could not have answered the purpose which Providence had evidently in view with the children of Israel; and, secondly, since the Lord designed to bless his people with a special gift, more valuable than aught else besides, that is to say, the possession of a religion founded upon truth, and immovably uniform in its happy effects upon society in all times and ages, to use such means, to exhibit such attestations, as would best conduce to render the effect permanent, and to impress the new truths upon the minds of so many human beings at one and the same time, that no subsequent miracle should be needed to retain a due knowledge of the law, thus publicly and solemnly announced, in the minds of the children of man.—We have enlarged before on the necessity of the miracles; consequently there is no occasion to dwell on the mere probability of them any longer to-day. We will therefore turn at once to the question: "Why was it that the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt was considered of that paramount importance, as to justify the exhibition of so many miracles in their behalf?" To this we will give the following answer. At a time when the world was nearly overrun by idolatry, the true light of divine wisdom, which emanated directly from the Lord as a gift to the first progenitors of the human family, had not become totally extinct; since it burned brightly in the heart of *one* at least who dreaded not to avow his conviction before the world, fearless of dangers which might result to him from his public confession of unpopular opinions. This wise man delivered the truths he professed to his descendants, of whom he lived to see the third generation, and then went down to the grave honoured as the luminary of the world by many nations, and to this day his name is revered among idolatrous people, who respect his example and his virtues, without knowing from whom they are derived. His immediate descendants and their families became by degrees mingled among the inhabitants of various lands; but the truths which Abraham had taught were not long remembered except by a few who remained faithful; and soon the rank falsehoods of superstition, in which a heathen world was sunk, overshadowed the beauties of the divine revelation which had been offered alike to all sons of Adam. The name of the Lord was not known among those who lived in the fairest portions of the earth; and from the rising of the sun to his setting ascended the smoke of sacrifice, which was incense of abomination to the God of Israel. In this deplorable state of mankind, of which all history bears the amplest evidence, the light of truth had need to be rekindled; and rekindled it was, as we are certified in the holy Scriptures. We acknowledge that the Lord has many ways to accomplish his purposes; it is not for us to say, how He is to effect his will; but without discussing whether He employed the best means or called in the most fitting agents, it is sufficient for us to know that, from the many means and the innumerable agents at his command, He chose to establish a people as the means of effecting the reformation of the earth, and these agents He selected from the descendants of Abraham, the friend of the Lord in times of the darkest idolatry. Whatever may be urged against the unworthiness of the Israelites in olden days, and against the *many* fearful backslidings of the Jews, their successors, at the present time, is nothing to the matter; for any other people might in all probability have become equally rebellious, if not more so than our own nation has shown itself. Only this point of view must be kept before us, that the miraculous redemption of the children of Israel had for its object the establishment of truths, which required an astounding exhibition of the divine power to render them for ever after impossible to be forgotten.

Having brought our inquiry to this sole point of any importance to the general inquirer after truth, we have at once an answer to the question: "What is the object of miracles?" It is, namely, the establishment, or confirmation rather, of a fact or series of theoretical and practical facts,* commonly called truths, in the minds of those persons before whom these wonderful events take place. But please to observe, brethren, any fact attested by a miracle is not true because of the performance of the miracle, but it is true because of the intrinsic nature of itself which constitutes it an undoubted fact or a truth. The miracle makes it only evident to the comprehension of the spectators, with the superadded conviction that the person who is enabled to perform it must needs speak the truth, always supposing that there is no deception or collusion in the performance which he offers as an attestation of the truth of that which he avers. Now what is the nature of a truth? This also we have illustrated on a former occasion, and we stated it to be, a fact which cannot be otherwise, or an idea of which the reverse cannot be true. If now a miracle has been wrought to attest a certain fact and to exhibit it as of divine origin, and as approved of by the wonder-working power of the Creator, effected through the agency of one of his holy ministers whom He sends from time to time to instruct and improve mankind: the truth of the fact has been permanently established, not alone for the time being when the miracle takes place, but also for all future times. Understand well, brethren, for it is a material point in the doctrines of our blessed religion, which contradistinguishes it from all other creeds. We just now said, that a truth is not a truth because of the miracle which attests it, but simply from its own intrinsic nature. But this self-evident proposition can be carried yet farther: it is this, that any truth must be always a truth, or what is the same, no circumstances can have any bearing upon its being so under any imaginable view of the question, no matter how slight, or how important any change in the condition of things may seem to all mankind combined.

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* For instance, the theory of the truth of Moses, the fact of the existence of God, and the historical truth of revelation.

Let us apply this test to the doctrines which the miracles in Egypt and the wilderness were to confirm or establish. We used above the words, "new truths," not however as though these truths then only became such, but as being either then first promulgated, or at least generally diffused among the children of man at that time inhabiting the earth. We have already recited, at the commencement of to-day's lecture, several texts which clearly indicate that it was deemed necessary to establish the unlimited, almighty power of the Lord, and to prove the nothingness of all the various deities, falsely so called, which were worshipped in Egypt. What did the miracles do in this point of view? They taught Pharaoh and his people something which they did not believe, which nevertheless was true; they believed, or professed to believe (it is all the same to us in our present inquiry) in an innumerable quantity of tutelary powers, which they represented under various visible shapes, and which images were placed in every part of their extensive country. When notified, let us assume, for the first time, that a Deity, announcing himself under a name which they had never known, demanded of them a sacrifice which it was galling to their pride to make, and which materially conflicted with their interests: they refused compliance, and they did not yield till sore experience had proved to them that, though the *name* of the God in whose name Moses spoke was new to them, He was nevertheless supreme over all, able to accomplish his omnipotent will in all He desired. In this way the Egyptians confessed themselves converts to the belief in the omnipotence of the Creator. But had the Lord not been omnipotent, the miracles could not have constituted Him endowed with this attribute. Yet He is omnipotent, He was so from the beginning, and He must necessarily continue so for ever and ever. Suppose now a miracle were to be performed, or a story should come down to us related as an historical fact, that at some period a miracle had been performed, real or fictitious, by a person who thereby meant to prove that the Lord had parted with his attribute of universal power: would we be able to believe such an attestation? For our parts, as Israelites, we would maintain, be the prodigy ever so great, the truth of its being performed ever so undoubted, that we must steadfastly reject the evidence thus offered, and support in our thoughts and our words our unshaken belief in the unvarying power of the Lord. For that God is omnipotent, that He is a perfect unity, that He is alone, without any associate, is true from the very nature of his being; and if we were by any possibility in doubt of this, the revelation of the Bible would have removed this doubt. Well, then, what does a miracle prove as such? merely that it has been performed, that an astonishing event has taken place. But has this attestation destroyed in the least the order of nature? has it in the least deprived the blessed Infinity of any power? By no means; miracles, even those wrought actually by God, are extra-natural, and yet destroy not nature; and as all power to work such extra-natural things comes from Him, the Author of all nature alone, it cannot diminish his ability to work his will, otherwise called his omnipotence, nor can it invest, independently of the actual delegation from the Lord himself, any being whatever with independent ability to do any thing in contravention of the glory and greatness of the Most High.—Nay, more; the revelation of God is the declaration of his will and wisdom. Its announcement was, as we have seen, attested by a public manifestation of prodigies and unheard of wonders. For what was this gift so solemnly attested? Simply to mark it with that seal of divine approbation, the like of which has never yet been given to any other event, save the creation alone. We maintain, therefore, that it cannot be abrogated by any means whatever (of which probably more hereafter), at all events that for its repeal it would require a similar, if not superior public manifestation, than accompanied its first promulgating. We therefore insist upon this point, as the main support for our continuance to uphold the ancient law of Moses (in the midst of all the difficulties which have attended its observance), that no means whatever have yet been employed by the Giver of this law to alter, revoke, or annul any part, the minutest even, of the whole system which He confided to our safe-keeping. Moreover, that no miracle, be it ever so well attested, nay even, were it at this very instant effected in the midst of us, and that we were convinced by the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears that there is no deception in the case, can absolve us from the obedience which we as the descendants or successors (for the proselytes too are equally with the sons of Israel children of the law and covenant) owe to the legislation of Sinai; and that consequently all such miracles, admitting, as we said, that they are real, are not the attestations which the Lord will receive as an excuse for our forsaking the religion which He himself, and himself alone, announced to us as that system to which we should remain everlastingly true and faithful. It cannot be possible that the Lord should mean, all along supposing that a miracle is indeed shown, to contradict by a single fact, or a series of facts, taking place necessarily before a comparatively small number of spectators, that which He deemed of sufficient importance to bring a whole people together in the wilderness to receive it, and to proclaim it then and there in the hearing of every man, woman, and child assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Let us look a little deeper into the case before we close this subject for the present; and excuse me, brethren, if you should find a repetition of what has been said already. That the Lord created the world alone, without aid, without associate, without a division in his own essence, was, it is true, the doctrine taught to the Israelites; but we have said, and said truly, that it was an announcement merely of the everlasting truth of God's existence and unity. Understand, unity means a oneness, without separation of parts, without division into separate individuals. A doctrine, believed in by many intelligent, wise, and good men, asserts, that at a time subsequent to the promulgation of the Law, there appeared on earth a personage who claimed to be a part of the godhead, or, at least, to be the mediator, whom, as it is averred, the prophets had announced (though we expect neither a divine being nor a mediator in our Messiah), and that he attested the truth of his claim by many wonderful exhibitions of miraculous power, even to the raising of the dead, convulsing in his own dying moments the whole country where he died, and afterwards rising alive from his sepulchre, before he ascended to heaven to become the mediator and the judge of mankind. We cannot, to-day, enter into an extensive examination of the subject; we will, therefore, merely ask: Can the performance of all these miracles make true what common sense and the Bible declare as not true? How can the fact that any person raises a dead man unto life establish as a fact the falsity that he is a part of the Deity, or that he is appointed to the formerly unknown dignity of interceder between God and man?—Could the unity of God be abrogated by a mere miracle? Could his omnipotence to save sinners, to hear prayer, to assist the distressed, be in the least abridged by the destruction of all nature? by the calling into existence of a new world?—Not for such a purpose were the miracles of the Bible wrought; they took place to glorify the Creator before his works, not to elevate creatures to an even rank with Him; and, consequently, as believers in the Bible, we cannot admit that any number of miracles can attest to that, which is not true from the very nature of the terms.

Farther: the word of God as revealed in the Law is either divine or not. We, as believers, assume the affirmative, and all other believers in prophecy admit the same. What does this require? Simply that the Bible is the everlasting truth, and this not because miracles attended its bestowal, but simply because it contains the necessary truths which God thought proper to teach the world. These truths would have been such without any miracle; and, consequently, no miracle can make them otherwise. So it says, "Thou shalt have no other god before my face." Does this prohibition appeal for its truth to the earthquake which shook the mountain of Horeb when the

Lord proclaimed it?—Again, "Thou shalt not bear the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Was the same miracle requisite to constitute it an everlasting point of the moral law?—Also, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh is the day of rest unto the Lord thy God." Did the miraculous proclamation of this precept alone render it binding, or was it founded upon a more firm basis than the evanescent exhibition of the most astounding occurrence?—We could multiply questions of this kind at pleasure, but it needs not: enough, the precepts as well as doctrines depend only on themselves, the latter as necessary deductions from the existence of a spiritual God, the former as the institutions derived from this God who, being supremely wise, cannot be so capricious as to order acts to be done, which He in a short time would cease to regard with pleasure, or would institute others either altogether new, or at least not in consonance with his first legislation.—Here, however, we are met again by persons of a different persuasion, no doubt as honest as we are ourselves, and as sincere in their belief as we can claim to be; they say, that miracles have been wrought to prove that the old covenant has been abolished, and new laws have been substituted in its stead. Could miracles, any thing less than a public legislation, effect such a result, we might pause for proofs that such miracles were at one time or the other actually performed. But we need not be so cautious; nowhere in the Bible is it asserted as a doctrine that any event can do away with what the law institutes as an everlasting ordinance; consequently the performance of many miracles, even to the raising the dead and dividing the waters of the great ocean, could not do away with the observance of the Sabbath, the prohibition of image-worship, or the joining of an adjunct in the service which we offer to the Lord. No, as He is one, everlastingly, unchangeably, and uniformly, in all times and under all circumstances, so must his law be unchangeable, everlasting, uniform; and any miracle whatever, even should one actually be permitted by his omniscience for a wise purpose, will not authorize us to forsake the path which He has taught us to tread.

This doctrine is clearly pointed out in the book of Deuteronomy, at the beginning of the thirteenth chapter: "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he giveth thee a sign or a token, and the sign or token come to pass whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou dost not know, and let us serve them: thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." And then continues the text (verse 5):

אחרי ה׳ אלהיכם תלכו ואתו תיראו ואת מצותיו
תשמרו ובקלו תשמעו ואתו תעבדו ובו תדבקון :

דבר׳ יג׳ ה׳ :

"After the Lord your God shall ye walk, and Him shall ye fear, and his commandments shall ye keep,. and to his voice shall ye hearken, and Him shall ye serve, and unto Him shall ye cleave."

Here, as usual in the Bible, the doctrinal point is too self-evident to need any extended explanation; and the words bear out clearly the articles of faith which I thought it my duty to teach you in the last lectures, including the one I have been permitted to lay before you this day, that, *first*, miracles are the instruments of the Lord to work conviction upon the minds of people of truths already existing, or to effect certain purposes which He deems of sufficient importance that He should subvert for a time or permanently the laws of nature; but that, *secondly*, no miraculous attestation can in the least alter any religious or moral truth, or do away with any precept of the Bible whatever; and that, *lastly*, should a miracle be permitted which would claim to be an attestation of an opposite doctrine, its evidence must be rejected as contrary to the plain instruction of the Lord, conveyed to us in his blessed book. One more observation, and I have done. Although a spurious miracle is spoken of in our text, there is no particle of evidence that any such was ever wrought, although should it be so, it would not and ought not to weigh in the least as evidence against any part of the Bible just as we have received it.—Therefore, sons of Israel! therefore, daughters of Zion! be ever alive to your duty, to the glorious privilege of being the chosen messengers of God's mercy; and let no allurement, no show of great deeds, call you away from the path which was pointed out to you, and which surely leads onward to salvation, yea, as surely as there is one, sole God and Saviour who has created the universe, and who has given us the soul which lives within us!

O God of truth and mercy! we thank Thee for the grace of the law of light which Thou hast bestowed on us. Give firmness to our resolves, that we may remain faithful; and let much good result to all mankind from the perseverance of thy people Israel, who have always been ready, even under sin, to be sealed by the covenant, and to walk in the light of that truth which springs from thy own pure essence. And may the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable before Thee, O our Rock and Redeemer! Amen.

Veadar 1st. } 5603.
March 3d. }

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE LAW OF ISRAEL.*

O God of Israel, the everlasting Father! we again approach Thee, in this house devoted to the service of thy name, accompanied by the younger branches of our community, who have been permitted by thy providence to receive some instruction in the law and the ordinances which Thou didst prescribe in ages long gone by unto thy own chosen people. And truly are we conscious of the blissful privilege which is ours through this law! Other nations, they who first fell off in the general idolatry which overspread the earth so soon after thy wrath had swept off the immense multitudes of a sinning race, have had to pass through centuries of mental darkness, in order to arrive at the glorious truths which thy word contains. And as yet the entire light has not been accorded to them; for they see the brilliancy which overspreads thy religion, and they are dazzled with its brightness, and they stumble in the excess of its effulgence, seeking in the recesses of mystery for that truth which is so plainly spread over the whole surface of thy law; they hear the voice in which Thou speakest to thy creatures, but they understand it not as proceeding from Thee, the only one and true God, but fancy that Thou art too mighty to be approached alone, without a mediator, by the sons of man. Whereas we have known Thee and thy ways from the moment that thy glory dwelt visibly before our astonished eyes on the blessed mountain in the desert of a far-off land; we call on thy name which is exalted above all, we come near Thee as a child approaches its father, feeling our unworthiness, yet not unmindful that it is thy way to compassionate, to forgive, to receive sinners who open unto thy all-searching view the chambers of their hearts, detesting their misdeeds, resolved to live a holier life, and to sin no more.

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* Prayer and Sermon spoken at the Fifth Anniversary of the Hebrew Sunday-School.

Yet do we know, that our conduct has not corresponded with the knowledge which is ours. The nations of the earth walk, many of them, in the course of piety according to the light which is theirs; they strive earnestly by faith and deeds to sanctify their life according to the doctrines which have been taught unto them; but we—we confess it with shame, we and our fathers have not so heeded thy instruction;

we would not listen to thy voice, and preferring the ways of error in which the gentiles walked, we wandered away from the path of righteousness, like the sheep that are scattered in the desert without a shepherd to lead them back to their healthful pasture. And even now we are yet obdurate; we heed not thy admonition, and follow the foolish imaginings of our own sinful hearts; we wish not thy instruction, and are seeking new roads which thy law does not sanction. It is therefore in accordance with thy righteousness that punishment has befallen us, that we were scattered among the nations, and that in every generation sorrow and affliction have pursued the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We thus discover in our dispersion thy almighty hand and thy mercy, which are exerted to lead us back to the path which we have forsaken, and to keep alive by means of tribulation the love and knowledge of thy law within our innermost heart.

Be it then thy will, O our God! to be with us in our endeavours to teach thy word. Let persuasive wisdom be imparted to our speech, that our words may sink deeply into the hearts of those who come to learn from us the ordinances and commandments of thy law; guard us against error; and cause that nothing injurious, nothing doubtful, nothing that is not strictly according to the everlasting truth which Thou hast prescribed, may fall from our lips, through ignorance or inadvertence; so that whatever is taught by us may tend to spread a true knowledge of thy religion among the youthful scions of the house of Israel, and confirm them in the holy faith which they have received from their fathers, and arm them with an unswerving firmness to resist, all the days of their lives, every temptation, every lure, every persuasion, every terror, which might, altogether or each separately, be brought against them to draw them aside from the law of Moses, either to fall into the snares of sin and transgression, or to break off altogether their connexion with the household of Jacob, which is theirs by their birthright as the descendants of those whom Thou didst call thy own first-born son Israel.

But not for our sakes do we ask this grace; for we are sinful, and weak in knowledge, and slothful in righteousness. Yet for thy own sake show thy glory, for the sake of thy kindness and thy truth give us this blessing we ask; and remove thereby the disgrace which the nations would otherwish attach to us, the small remnant that has escaped the many persecutions which we had to endure because that our flesh was sealed with thy covenant, and because that we were called by thy name. For why should they, who worship not Thee alone, be suffered to believe that we are cast out from thy favour? that our blessed law is no longer thy will? Whereas this law has been instituted by thy will and wisdom, and Thou hast ever preserved it, as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob. We therefore beseech Thee to remove graciously the stumbling-block, which the cares of life throw in the paths of many sons of Israel; cause them to feel sincerely the holiness and truth of thy word; make them conscious that worldliness and sin are not the ways of everlasting life; so that they may devote their hearts in humble faith and yielding trust to thy service; in order that grace may abound in our midst, piety become universal, religious knowledge be the characteristic of our brotherhood, and thy name be glorified through our words and actions; and that the nations may thus be brought to acknowledge that our waiting for thy salvation is the height of wisdom, and our observance of thy laws, the summit of perfection, by which only we can be led into the gates of everlasting bliss, and our souls be rendered pure and cleansed from sin. Yea, purify us, O our Father! in thy mercy; inasmuch as Thou, O Lord! art the priest of Israel, who cleansest us with thy waters of purification, even thy holy spirit, that we may be washed clean from all our iniquities, and from all our abominations, and from all our impurities, as Thou hast spoken through the mouth of thy prophet.—But above all, let us pray Thee to preserve us one entire people, to remove from us all causeless contention, to banish from us all discord, and to frustrate all the evil designs, whether from Israelites or strangers, which might have for their object to destroy the unity which once distinguished thy people. Keep us thus entire, our ranks unbroken, and our numbers undiminished in our captivity, till the time that Thou wilt send the son of David to proclaim salvation to the ends of the earth, to bid the captives go free, and to give light to those who walk in darkness. May this be thy will, for the sake of thy covenant and goodness. Amen.

Brethren and Friends!

In our daily prayers which were handed down to us from our forefathers occurs the following passage:

ברוך אלהינו שבראנו לכבודו והבדילנו מן התועים
ונתן לנו תורת אמת וחיי עולם נטע בתוכינו :

"Blessed be our God! who hath created us for his glory, and separated us from those who go astray, and given us the law of truth, and planted eternal life within us."

In these words we return our thanks to the Lord for his mercy in having been pleased to call us to his service, and to separate us from the mass of mankind who are in error with regàrd to religious duties and doctrines, by bestowing on us the law which contains the true principles which He himself declared to be in consonance with his wisdom, and best promotive of the happiness of man. The unbeliever and the gentile will doubtlessly smile when they hear us recite these words. They say, that we have no superiority over any other people; on the contrary, that we are inferior to them in the progress we have made in arts and sciences, and that, as far as moral superiority is concerned, we are far behind many of the different sects which are scattered over the world. Though both these positions, by which an inferiority on our part is assumed, admit of ample contradiction, or at least of explanation, we may for the present admit them as true: and still we will maintain that we have cause for thankfulness in the possession of the true law. Were it that worldly greatness, that progress in arts and sciences could alone stamp a nation as powerful and great, then indeed might we feel ashamed of our littleness; but there are other elements of greatness, and these are the heritage of the sons of Jacob.

Thus also, should a heathen philosopher from Egypt, a gentile sculptor from Greece, and an idolatrous conqueror from Rome, have heard a Hebrew of olden days expressing in the words of our ritual his deep sense of obligation for superior enlightenment, they, one and all, would doubtless have in their inmost soul despised the vain arrogant barbarian whose thoughts were not moulded in the refined fashion of the schools of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero; who could not carve from the rude marble the noble conceptions of Phidias or Praxiteles, and who walked chained to the car of the triumphing warrior who had defeated the armies of Israel, burnt their temple, and destroyed their towns. Still, my friends, who would have been arrogant? the slave—the chained—the despised Hebrew, or the versatile, the vain-glorious, and the haughty heathens? True, if we regard with the eye of admiring reverence the works of human genius, the discoveries of the human mind, or the achievements of human warriors on the battle-field as paramount to the sciences of simple life, to the knowledge of "how to live," then indeed were Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, on an elevation which we never attained. But if we take a truer view of all these advantages, if we endeavour to convince ourselves that the works of art are but fleeting monuments which, baseless fabrics as they are, vain man erects to perpetuate a name which is destined to oblivion; if we consider, that the halls of Carnac, the cave of Elephanta, the temples of Athens, and the Coliseum at Rome, are all in ruins, sad mementos of what they have been; if we reflect that despite of the researches of philosophers, of the multifarious systems of Bramins, of Confucius, of the Magi, of the sages of Memphis, of Pythagoras and the later philosophers of Greece, the heathen world had remained uninstructed in the duties of life; if we dwell, with the melancholy with which the nothingness of man inspires us upon the fact, that each conquerer has at last been compelled to give way to a more powerful successor; how the Assyrian, who had overthrown the kingdom of Israel, sunk before Nebuchadnezzar; and his grandson before Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian; how their kingdom fell before the mighty son of Philip of Macedon; that his power gradually decayed after his death, first a prey to contending chiefs, and then swallowed up by the colossus of Rome, which strode triumphant over many a fair land from the shores of the German Sea to the banks of the Euphrates; and that, not to multiply instances, this colossus too fell under the repeated blows of fierce barbarians, whose origin is unknown, and who have also passed into oblivion after their mission was accomplished; if we consider all these things, and that the homes of the Pharaohs, despite the great wisdom of the Egyptians; the halls of the Areopagus, despite of the skill of the Greeks; the throne of the Cæsars, despite the valour of the Romans, have passed into the hands of warlike neighbours or savage invaders; that their history, their thoughts, their words are veiled unto us in the mist of antiquity, which no research of ours can penetrate: we shall surely not accord to either of them the right of regarding with contempt the pretensions of Israel as the benefactors of mankind. They might indeed smile at the captive who, at the moment of the deepest degradation, when the heart of the bravest fails, who knows that barely are the boastful words spoken ere his head will be struck off to glut the barbarous vengeance of the ruthless conqueror, feels a holy consolation that he is better than his captors, that his system is wiser than their fairest philosophies, and that his religion will survive their states, their nations, their creeds, their very names; who is conscious that the name of Israel will be a blessing to many people, that their light will guide the footsteps of unborn nations, though he must now perish for having dauntlessly defended with the blood-stained blade of a shattered sword, fighting in the last entrenchment, on the last day of the independence of his land, the homes that he loved, the temple where he worshipped. Yes, the heathens might smile, when the Hebrew blessed his God for the gift of the law—yet was he justified in this joy, which they could not feel; his was the humility of faith in divine things, their derision, the effect of human arrogance; and the event, too, has justified him, and rebuked them; for the cause of Israel, though not yet triumphant, is not rejected by the Lord, whilst our conquerors and our oppressors have one by one been cut off from the land of the living, and have left their names and their lands a byword and a hissing to succeeding generations. It is not to be denied, that our name also has been converted into a reproach, and that the history of our people has been appealed to as exhibiting the striking effects of the awful visitation which follows upon a forgetfulness of God. But then our beautiful law has been adopted by many wise nations as their rule of life; yea, the remnants of the oppressors, who had passed like a devastating storm over our once lovely heritage, have thrown off the rules of life they then pursued, and have in their stead taken a few of our moral precepts, and they thus endeavour to show that they are now the favoured nations of Heaven. But let them boast that they are the children of grace; let them triumph in the supposition that they are more instructed, more enlightened than the sons of Israel are: still, whence did their religion come? was a new revelation vouchsafed unto them? did another prophet, like unto Moses, indeed come into their benighted lands, and proclaim a special announcement of a new code of laws in the name of the Most High? Our opponents themselves do not claim it; they refer to Moses and the prophets as their instructors,—understand to our Moses and our prophets, to our law and our predictions. How then could the Romans or their heathen contemporaries have had true cause to exult over the captive Hebrew? were they not arrogant when they gloried in their victories which did not save their empires from destruction, and their opinions from oblivion? and was not the captive justified for thanking God for the blessing of the law, which, whilst the name of Jew is despised, whilst the people of Jacob are outcasts in every land, outcasts because not governed politically by their own equitable code, holds its dominion over the minds of men more firmly and more widely diffused, than when Israel dwelt securely in their own land?

We will therefore not claim to be more instructed in worldly sciences than our gentile friends, which we are not; we will not say, that as a people we are more moral, more honest than they are, which, though surely true in some respects, is not so in others; but this we will say, that we are more acquainted with the basis of all truths than they are, we are blessed with a treasure from which, despite of the pride of human opinion, they have been compelled to borrow most of their moral principles, and that whatever they have of their own, independently of this source, is either not practicable or of a very questionable usefulness.

Let us look a little into the matter. Where do we find the origin of the universal precepts of worship and philanthropy, "Love God above all, and thy neighbour as thyself," but in the blessed books of Moses? Did he not teach from the very first commencement of his commonwealth, that the love we are to bear to our neighbour, which should respect his rights and the feelings even which the peculiarity of his position might occasion, should be the first principle upon which the superstructure of our whole state polity was to be founded? Perhaps the doubter may be induced to appeal to the penal statutes which appear rigorous to the superficial observer. But are rigorous laws necessarily cruel in their effect upon society? This would be so indeed, if it had been left to the judge to execute bodily punishment at his arbitrary will upon a person brought before him with or without cause. Yet we shall not find the practical effect of the law at all of this nature. The law itself defined the offence as well as the punishment, and publicity, credible witnesses and a searching investigation were all required before any punishment could follow upon any crime whatever, great or small, according to the letter of the law; consequently the rigorous enactments could only reach him who boldly and voluntarily exposed himself to their action; and as the statutes were publicly known, and could not be increased by any subsequent legislation, every member of the state had ample opportunity to make himself acquainted with their nature and tendency. In short, it was a regard for the rights of all which induced the denunciation of punishment against him who either had grievously wronged his fellow-being in person, moral standing, or possessions, or had by a scandalous example defied the laws upon which rested the best interests of the commonwealth. Or, in other words, the love for the neighbour should be like the love for ourselves; he was to be restrained from injuring us even if he had the inclination; we had a right to expect from him assistance in our need, kindness if we required it, consolation if we were in trouble: whilst we on our part had the same obligation towards him, to abstain from injuring him in the least, and to render him all the services in our power which his situation might call for. This, in brief, was the social love demanded by Moses, and is in truth the only sure foundation of a happy republic. If any subsequent code teaches the same, it is tantamount to the Mosaic code; and if it teaches any thing different, it is impracticable, and cannot in truth become the constitution of a free and enlightened people.

The love of God above all things is also the very life of our religion. What does the Scripture say: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Can we love Him more ardently than this precept demands? Is there any other mode by which we can demonstrate our love than by yielding all our energies, all our possessions, nay, our very life in the service of our heavenly Father? He who knows all our thoughts has asked no more—He accepts the services of man according to the strength He has endowed him with. What more then could we add thereto?—Is it, perhaps, that we should cease to be human? that we should withdraw ourselves from the walks of life in the seclusion of a cloister? in the caverns of the desert? live with wild beasts, or with men more savage than the brutes of the forest? that we should shun the intercourse with beings like ourselves, devote our days to fasting, our nights to useless meditations? If this had been requisite, it would have been so taught us; the absence of such ordinances clearly proves that the law contemplated the love of God to be exhibited in the midst of social enjoyment, in the walks of every-day life; we should hold all we possess as subject to his will, even whilst the mirthful laugh is heard in our dwellings, whilst little children play on our knees, whilst youths and maidens stand around their parents to ask for instruction or to share their domestic happiness.—What think you, that such a love of God is something impracticable? something too refined for a mortal to attain? O no! look at the many righteous fathers and mothers of our race from our very origin, from the birth of Abraham to the destruction of our temple and even since: and you will see that their social happiness did not prevent them from following the path of the Lord though it led them to death, to tribulation, or to captivity. Yet, they who love the Lord, love also all the beings whom He has created, they feel that they have duties to perform on earth towards those who like themselves bear the image of God;

but they feel more deeply yet that to Him who lives to eternity their whole duty is due, and they are therefore prepared to follow the call of Heaven, like Abraham, to sacrifice, if need be, their only child on whom all their earthly hopes are centred; to go out, like Elijah did, into the wilderness, without provision for the journey in their bags, without a drop of water in their cruses; or to die, as did the many martyrs, in the defence of their faith, preferring to yield their spirits in innocence and truth, sooner than accept the bribes and offices of the enlightened barbarians, who, professing to possess a religion of peace and good-will to mankind, doom to the stake and the scaffold those who cannot honestly agree with them in religious opinions. Such a love of God our law teaches, such a love our history proves to have frequently animated its followers. Can any system show a more consistent one? is there in fact any other demanded by the creeds of enlightened men? Now say, where was this beautiful virtue first taught—in the law of Moses or elsewhere?

But one more instance will we cite. Human experience has proved the usefulness, nay, the necessity of a day of rest; I do not believe that any people of antiquity had any such institution as a regular weekly recurrence, although among some nations several days of lawless festivity were allowed once a year to their bondmen; nor has modern paganism anything resembling such a weekly respite from toil. Still modern civilized nations all recognize it in one shape or another. Now say, whence was it derived? We acknowledge that priestcraft has succeeded to induce a large proportion of the world to rest on the first day of the week, a day which the Lord has not ordained, which He has not sanctified, nor blessed above all other days. Nevertheless where did the idea spring from to require that the workshops be closed, the labourers be permitted to abstain from constant toil, and even the beasts of burden to rest? Is it not from the law of Moses? Was it not there written, before anywhere else, that the Lord had been pleased to give rest unto his people Israel on the seventh day of the week, on the holy Sabbath, the day which He had blessed and sanctified, which He had instituted as a sign between Him and Israel forever, to show that they believe that He had created the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them in a period of six days?—And where, again we ask, is the revelation which teaches a different lesson? Believe me one thing, and we challenge those who differ from us to the proof, that there is not a tittle of evidence even in their authorities to prove in so many words that any Sabbath was ever instituted except the Mosaic or Jewish day of rest; and that there is consequently no reason to glorify any system, because of this blissful ordinance, above the law which Israelites consider their rule of life.

But what shall we say concerning the doctrinal part of our faith? If the moral and religious parts are so perfect as our brief exhibit has proved them, the ideal of our belief is not less so. What does it teach of God? That He is the Creator with whom there is no being to share the dominion, without whom there is no god; that He is supreme, over all things; that He is true in his word, faithful in his promises; that He is unchanging in his essence, perfect in his happiness; that He is merciful and forgiving, desiring the welfare of his creatures, and ever intent on giving them opportunities to retrieve the errors which they have committed, and to propitiate their God by an amended line of conduct; that He is the Creator, the Ruler, the Saviour, the Father, the Friend of all that has life, and that everything that is has been framed for a wise, useful, and benevolent purpose. Is this exposition of our doctrines beautiful, animating, consoling? Assuredly it is; for in it we find ourselves the special objects of a wise Providence, who watches over us, and loves and protects us, who desires our happiness, and forsakes us not even when we have wickedly rejected his mercy, but benignantly calls to us by means of the instruments so accessible to his omnipotence to bethink ourselves concerning our deeds, and to come back to his paternal embrace, where we shall find peace without end, blessing without measure.—This is our belief; this is the doctrine of the law of life. But are the doctrines of other systems equally pure, equally simple?—No, they deny the mercy of God to all except to the comparatively few who profess a certain set of ideas; they, some at least, imagine a complication in the person of the Deity, and fancy, and so teach, that there can be no happiness, no peace, no salvation without the intervention of a being neither God nor man, according to some, or, as others have it, by a divine being, who had to become a sacrifice for the sins of man. And, if we ask for the proof that the Bible ever inculcated such a doctrine, we are referred to a number of passages which, not one of them, teaches it in so many words; on the contrary, all insist that the Divine

Being who spoke to Moses is the one, sole, eternal, merciful God, who hears prayer, and forgives the sinner who returns from his evil and acts righteously.

If then the gentile or the unbeliever smiles over our arrogance, as it sometimes is termed, in calling ourselves a peculiar people, a favourite race: we will point out to him the many excellencies and beauties which are either derived from our law, and thence transferred to other systems, or which are as yet alone our guides and our doctrines. Well may we then say in the fulness of our gratitude: "Blessed be our God who hath created us for his glory, and separated us from those who go astray, and given us a law of truth, and planted eternal life within us!"—Yes, beloved friends, it is the mercy of God alone that has wrought this wonder, that has set Israel apart, blessed with truth, blessed with life, blessed with a law distinct from the multitude of the gentiles, who see a light which they do not know, and hear a voice which they do not understand. May it then be our study to make ourselves familiar with this heavenly treasure, to endeavor to understand it in all its bearings, and to fulfil all the duties which this knowledge demands at our hands.

And you, who are teachers in this blessed undertaking, of the school the happy fruits of which we have beheld this day, remember what it is you have undertaken. You have avowed by your presence and by your labours, that you have a firm belief in Israel's God, in Israel's law, in Israel's hopes. Israel's God is the everlasting Father, from whom all that is has sprung into being; Israel's law is that blessed code which He announced to our fathers as his everlasting will and covenant; Israel's hopes are the bright days of a happy future which in God's own time will dawn upon the world, dispel the mists of darkness, of doubt, of superstition, of unbelief, and establish the kingdom of God over the hearts of all men from sea to sea, and from pole to pole, in which days the Lord will be called one, and one shall be his name. Remember this! hold to this truth firmly! and use your influence, your authority, all the arts of persuasion flowing from a holy enthusiasm, to impress the same belief and hopes on the minds of those who come unto you to drink through your means the waters of the fountain of life which was opened unto us on Mount Sinai; and let your virtuous example prove to your charges that in following your steps they are treading safely and firmly the path, which leads to everlasting happiness and salvation.

Parents! you whom the Lord has permitted to become fathers and mothers in Israel, to you we look confidently to be the spiritual guides of your offspring. The law says: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and speak of them when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Remember this duty; let religion be a frequent subject of conversation in the presence of your children, not the one, God forbid, which should call in question the truths of the law, or throw discredit upon its precepts, but one of encouragement, which should endeavour to explain in a familiar manner the doctrines which have been handed down to us, and the duties which we should observe. But if the proper information is wanting in you, omit no opportunities yourselves to acquire a due knowledge of divine things, under the persuasion that this course is one of the greatest duties which you owe to yourselves, to your children, to your fellow-Israelites, and above all, to your God.—But be especially watchful that no act of yours should teach your children to neglect religion, or to despise the religious instruction which they obtain at school or from men who speak to them in the name of the Lord; and thus only can you fulfil the obligation which you admit to rest upon you by desiring that your offspring should be instructed in the word of God.

If all thus combine, if teachers, fathers, and mothers all contribute to make the law of life understood and obeyed: how readily will then the children, who are the objects of this holy care, respond in their knowledge and their conduct to the wishes of their own immediate friends and all Israel; the blessed truths of revelation will then flourish in their hearts; their deeds will correspond with the spirit which animates them; and they, their teachers, their parents, and they who are their fellows in the only true religion, will rejoice with songs of thanksgiving at the time when the spirits of the blessed will stand to judgment before that adorable, unending, only God, who alone in his wisdom separated us from the nations, and planted in our midst the law of life, his truth, his everlasting and unchangeable word. Amen.

Veadar 17th. } 5603.
March 19th. }

DISCOURSE XXII.

TRUE SANCTIFICATION.*

O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Thou who art everlasting, merciful, and gracious, sanctify, we beseech Thee, by thy presence and favour, the work which we have accomplished this day, and cause it to redound to thy glory and the mental peace of the remnant of thy children who come hither to worship and to adore thy holy and tremendous name. Let thy light dwell in this house, whilst ever there are here worshippers who proclaim thy unity, and let thy mercy not be withheld from the sinner who repents himself of his deeds, and comes into this sanctuary to rekindle anew in his darkened soul the fire of thy pure adoration.

Let us also beseech Thee, O Father of mercy! to cause this place of worship to become a bond of true union to all who resort hither; may they feel that they are Israelites who owe to Thee obedience, inasmuch as Thou art their God and King; may they feel that they are members of the household of Jacob, in order that they may regard all true believers as brothers and friends; may they feel that they are children of man, who owe duty and kindness to all men of every country and every persuasion, in order that they may exercise righteousness and charity in all their pursuits, towards all who may be within the sphere of their action.

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* This address was delivered at the dedication of a hall, or a temporary place of worship, for the German congregation Rodef Sholem of Philadelphia, on Nissan 12, 5603.

Do this also unto us: fill our hearts with deep humility, that we may see our own weakness, our own sinfulness, our own unworthiness, and be fully alive to thy power, wisdom, and perfection; in order that we may subdue the pride of human knowledge, and seek for light in the only true source, the only infallible one amidst all that is deceptive and unstable, namely, in the words of that holy Book which Thou hast written for our instruction.—In this manner shall we know that we have found grace in thy sight, when we perceive from the happy fruits of piety, peace, humility, and good-will, that thy spirit is indeed in the midst of us, that it quickens and prospers all our endeavours in thy service.

We beseech thee also to have mercy on Zion; remember her captive children wherever they are scattered; save them from the snare of the fowler; frustrate the evil designs of those who endeavour to oppress them; and let the nations be made conscious that they are indeed thy servants whom Thou hast chosen to proclaim thy holy name unto the ends of the earth.—Build up speedily the walls of Jerusalem, and fulfil all the good which Thou hast promised through thy prophets; let peace prevail on earth; let all mankind be brought to acknowledge Thee alone on earth as Thou art one in all the universe, and let thy pure worship subdue every heart, influence every soul, so that every tongue may praise Thee, and every heart hope for thy salvation only. Mayest Thou do this, even in our days, through the agency of Messiah, son of David. Amen.

BRETHREN!

On an occasion like this, when every heart is glad, when every soul is moved by a holy sensation of a goodly work accomplished, it well beseems the reflecting mind to turn with thoughtful scrutiny unto the object of all those festivities which it has witnessed. We never act without a motive; in the most trivial action, where the will is not constrained, there is a free impulse which prompts the soul, which moves the inward man to put forward his mental and bodily energy to accomplish his desire; and surely the scene witnessed this day, the sounds of psalmody, the processions, the hymns and the words of praise, all proceeding from a free will, from a consenting and yielding spirit, must mean something; or else there would not have been present this joyous and crowded assembly to participate in that which has taken place before them. What have we then done? We have devoted a place to the service of Almighty God, the Creator, the Ruler of the Universe, the only Eternity, the sole Saviour of mankind. Momentous thoughts! sublime ideas! Children of clay, atoms of the moment who are here this day energetic in life, joyous in intellect, buoyant with hope, elated by success, proud in their energy, confident in their wisdom, secure in their wealth, but asleep in death perhaps ere the sun shines again on the morrow, or at least depressed in spirit, mourning over hopes disappointed, over plans frustrated in their very inception, stripped by the hand of disease of their boasted wisdom, by the arm of destruction of their precious wealth—such children of clay as these have dedicated a dwelling to the Holiest of holies, to the Ancient of days whose years have no ending, to the Wisest of all who numbers every one of our thoughts and scans all our actions, that He may come in his mercy to be present at our assemblings, to lend his ears to our prayer, to bless us with his bounty, and to remove from us the evil which we dread! And will He indeed come and dwell among us? can we indeed propitiate his favour? Is He not of unending greatness? are we not unclean and sinful in his sight? Even so, the whole world, the universe cannot contain Him, He is, as the Jewish sages very properly express it, מקומו של עולם the Place of the world; He is in truth immeasurably great, immeasurably exalted: whilst we are defiled by misdeeds, circumscribed within the brief space of threescore and ten years, many reaching not the half of this short space of time, few exceeding it, and then their steps totter, their once vigorous limbs grow feeble, their brilliant intellects become darkened by the clouds of age, and at length decay and death close the scene over all, over the little and over the great, and when the pomp of array which accompanies the proud of the earth in their way to the tomb is over, their memory will speedily vanish from among the living, equally with that of those whom an inglorious grave encloses in its dark folds, whose history is written as though it were in the sands on the sea-shore, obliterated by the first wave that dashes over the spot in its wild tumultuous play.—Nevertheless is it true that God dwelleth among men, nevertheless is it true that mortals can propitiate Him by their deeds of love and piety. Yet we may not see Him and live; whilst the clay covers the spirit, the ethereal essence cannot be revealed to our eyes, the material cannot behold the immaterial, the impure cannot look on the holy. But in times of old when we had a spot especially consecrated by an evident miracle, whereon stood the house which our fathers had built, there was a something, an appearance not like the emptiness which now resides in our places of assembly, a something unusual, awful, mysterious, which was on occasions rendered manifest to the eyes of the worshippers, which proved that there the more immediate glory of the Lord did dwell. When, however, sin became regnant among our tribes, our families, and our households, this glory left our desecrated temple, and the heathens entered the holy of holies, and uttered loud shouts of exultation when the flame seized pinnacle after pinnacle, when rafter after rafter came crashing down into the fiery sea below, when the walls were crushed, and the foundations laid bare, and desolation triumphed over the structure, that was once beautiful and sublime, the joy of our nation, the boast of our assemblies. And now we are scattered, congregated in small numbers in every land which shuts not out our wandering race from its boundaries, and we essay, wherever permitted, to erect minor sanctuaries to meet therein as one man to call in the language of ancient Israel on the God of our fathers. And though the visible glory does not fill these walls as when Solomon brought in the ark of the covenant into the holy of holies: we have every reason to believe that a pious adoration, flowing from a sincere conviction, accompanied by a due humility, because that we are in a house devoted to the service of the only God, conscious that we stand in the presence of Him who sees every secret of our hearts, will cause our prayers to be received in favour, and, what is more, it will subdue our whole nature to the Lord of all; it will chain us indissolubly to the horns of his altar, and make every deed of our life an act of worship, every day of our existence a day of mental repose, spent, so to say, in the sacred precincts of our Father's house. Such a spirit of piety may well be said to be the effect of the peculiar grace, the offspring of that invisible glory, which must be sought for in the places especially devoted to prayer, where brethren meet in unity to concentrate their forces, to elevate their voices, and to send upward their united petitions to the throne of Grace. And where such a sacred union prevails, where the hearts are humble, where the spirits are contrite, abashed before the purity which is the character of God, subdued by the awe which the mortal must feel when approaching the Creator, who can doubt that there the glory of the Eternal will indeed come, to bless, to purify, to exalt, to hear, and to save?—Those who are weak in faith, the children of worldliness may doubt; but not so they who place a firm reliance on the revelation of the Bible, who are the sincere followers of the God of Jacob. For these are the words of the prophet Isaiah which he utters as proceeding from the Most Holy speaking comfort to the humble and contrite:

כי כה אמר רם ונשא שכן עד וקדוש שמו מרום
וקדוש אשכון ואת דכא ושפל רוח להחיות רוח
שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים : ישע' נז' טו' :

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that abideth to eternity and whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is contrite and of a lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite." Isaiah lvii. 15.

No matter then whether we are in captivity, or in Palestine, whether our teachers are the lords of the earth, or the lowly ones who propagate the Word in dread of the persecutor's sword, whether we are prosperous in worldly goods or suffering the pangs of penury: it is all the same to our God and King, He sees us alike in all situations; and if the spirit be true, then will He be in the midst of us; and our thoughts will be purified, our soul will become elevated, the will must become subdued, and the doctrines of religion must triumph over the inspirations of sinful desires, so that our conduct will proclaim us to all the world, more loudly, more clearly than mere words can do, children of grace, children of divine salvation.

Is it then enough, beloved friends, that we dedicate synagogues for outward worship without an inward consecration? Think on one thing, that it is not so many stones, so many beams of wood, so many decorative ornaments, which can become the habitation of the Lord, if the wickedness of our deeds, the unhallowedness of our thoughts bid the Holy Spirit to remove from us. Was not the temple of Solomon the most costly building of antiquity? and yet Nebuchadnezzar burnt it; was not the temple of Zerubbabel, afterwards rebuilt by Herod and beautified in a wonderful manner, when it showed its wavelike front high above the beauty and elegance of Jerusalem, also subverted by the Roman Titus?

And why was the wrath poured out? Simply because the people confided in the outward temple, and forgot the spirit which alone could preserve the structure of human hands from the destroyer. During the first period of our history, the sin of idolatry was prevalent among us; we saw the nations around us bowing to stocks and stones, we saw the freedom from moral restraint which rendered every act lawful for them: and we were seized with the mania that there must be something useful in acts which, whilst they left ample scope for the indulgence of the passions, brought with them, to appearance, no worldly sufferings, inasmuch as empires flourished though their kings and people adored the works of their hands, and observed not the restraints which the law of Moses required, and ate unhallowed food in the temples of their gods, and rioted in pleasures which our code denounced as sinful. We saw this, and were deceived; and our rulers led the way in the path of apostacy; till the gods of Judah were equal in number to its cities; every where was rebellion against the heavenly kingdom; every where heathenism rose triumphant above the blessed Pentateuch. What was the end? Simply that the boasted sanctuary, which in the midst of all our sins, we still loved, was taken from us; the glory of God fled from it, because near it was the image of abomination; and the enemy swept away with fire the palace of the Most High which He had cast off in his wrath, it being no longer the dwelling of his spirit, because his children had sinned.

Our residence among the heathens, the daily view of the follies which they practised, cured us of our love for idols during a captivity of seventy years, when we dwelt on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, where we hung, on the willows of Babylon's streams, the tuneful harps, which in happier days had sounded their melodies to the sacred songs of Zion.—And with a return of more righteous feelings, the mercy of the Lord also returned to us, and Cyrus caused a proclamation to be sent out giving liberty to the sons of Judah to rebuild the house, the destruction of which they mourned by annual fasts and humiliations.—Again stood on its old foundation Israel's house of prayer, the priests again sacrificed on the altar, and the spirit of prophecy again comforted those who mourned the minor splendour of the new temple. But whilst the entire people had not been recalled to their former homes, the gift of prophecy was not any longer vouchsafed to the small remnant which had returned, any farther than to confirm the ancient covenant at Horeb, and to exhort the Israelites to remain faithful to the end, with the promise of temporal and spiritual blessedness. Yet would we not hear! we had learned to despise idolatry; but the love of God had, notwithstanding this, not altogether subdued our hearts. Instead of idol worship, as during the first temple, we dived into the philosophical systems of our neighbours, and divided ourselves into fierce political and religious sects, as though we could, by disunion, build up our God-governed commonwealth. Heathen views, under a different guise, thus found a ready entrance into our spirits, and we were estranged from the pure worship of God. Anon, the internal dissension, at first glowing under the surface, broke out into open strife; and scarcely had our oppressed state been wrested from the grasp of a madman, Antiochus Epiphanes he was called, scarcely had victory against all outward enemies crowned the arms of Judah's bravest sons: when domestic contentions, encouraged by a disregard of the duties demanded by the law, caused factious brothers to call in the arbitrament of Roman generals, who soon made their direful power felt in every dwelling in all our land, and we became tributary vassals to Rome, and accepted chiefs and kings of its appointment. Misfortune, however, had not taught us to resort to the counsels of wisdom; we continued our contests in the very streets of Jerusalem, brother warred against brother, and all ties of kindred were dissolved. The temple was still honoured, and thousands poured out their blood like water, and heroes offered their forms as a rampart around it, over which the enemy could only pass after their souls had fled; but the crimes of the people had rendered the sanctuary abhorred in the sight of Heaven, and the deeds of heroism were in vain, and useless were the rivers of blood that were shed; for the enemy prevailed as in ages before. Yet it was not the Roman prowess, but the crimes of the Jews which overthrew all at one fell swoop, and thus were but too literally fulfilled the threatenings of the father of the prophets, given us as a warning just before the close of his earthly career.

Did this take place because Israel, as a nation, were entirely rejected from the pale of God's mercy? O no! We are taught, in many passages in Scripture, that the Lord would never forsake the people of his covenant. What, then, was the cause of this terrible catastrophe? It was, as we have said already, that the people had neglected the truth, and sought in other paths for that happiness which can be found only in the ways of the law. What use was there among such for the ceremonials, the solemnities, the presence itself of the outward temple, when the spirit, which alone could render the whole acceptable, had been banished by the disputes of philosophical schools and the crimes and outrages of contending factions? It was for this reason, then, that the glory of the Lord passed away from the midst of us, and left us to receive the just punishment of our crimes, crimes which could only be atoned for, so was the decree of eternal Justice, by the dismemberment of our state, by the slaughter of our people, and by the destruction of all that was held sacred and dear among us.

We would therefore deceive ourselves, should we think that outward ceremonials, that the pomp of worship alone could be enough to propitiate the Lord if we sin, or were we to presume that He would accept external acts if the inward sanctification be wanting.—How then shall we do on an occasion like this? Shall we be satisfied with the ceremonial, the anthem, the psalm and the loud exclamations, the united responses of joyous hundreds? O no! we should bring a sacrifice of our will upon the altar of virtue, we should reflect that, by coming to worship, we also come to acknowledge the supreme rule of the Creator. As servants therefore of the Omnipotent should we approach his presence; we should endeavour to learn what He desires us to do, and then follow his guidance, without regarding the difficulties which may be in our way, unchecked by dangers, undismayed by opposition, untempted by worldly allurements. We ought to reflect that our deeds are not, as though a mortal only watched us, likely to be forgotten, overlooked or excused, but that the eye that beholds us is wakeful, always observant, never dimmed by watching, never wearied with fatigue; that therefore each of our deeds will come up in judgment against us, both in this life and the life to come, to demand against us whatever visitation our misconduct may have merited. Such a view of our accountability will check within us every desire for transgression, and will enable us to withstand every allurement which might appeal to us to forsake the way of the Lord. For what can to a mind, thus feeling, counterbalance the incurrence of the displeasure of Heaven? Tell him that wealth will pour into his treasure-chambers; but will he not answer, Will this save me from the judgment of my God? Assure him that the height of human power will be his; but he will appeal to you, Will such greatness excuse my sinning against the law of my Maker?—But where this inward piety is wanting, how readily is every excuse snatched at to extenuate the commitment of every wrong. A paltry item of gain will then induce one to violate the Sabbath, to labour every day in the year, to think but rarely or never of the welfare of the immortal soul, as though the few extra pieces of silver which the Sabbath-labour may perhaps bring could weigh against the displeasure of the Lord, as though the hoarding up of a little superfluous wealth were all the duty of man on earth.—Another, who fears not truly the indignation of God, violates the laws of neighbourly love, utterly regardless of the rights of every one who comes in contact with him, as if every thing on earth were made for him only, and every one had need to bend the knee to his authority. We will not multiply illustrations; but of this we may be sure, that any act of wickedness will readily be perpetrated, when the spirit is not properly subdued, when the passions have not been subjected to the guidance of the divine law, when the man is not fully alive to the knowledge that to his God are due every act of his life and every thought which his soul can frame. It is not to be denied that the attainment of this degree of piety is not very easy, or that constant watching and care are not required to enable us to make progress in this holy calling, or that without heavenly grace all our labours would be in vain.—But then is not this end the chief object of our existence? What fatigues do we not undergo to acquire wealth and renown! how many sleepless nights does not the voluptuary spend to gain the enjoyment of some fleeting pleasure! And shall we think the salvation of our soul of too little importance to labour thereat from the beginning of our earthly existence till its close by death? Besides this, the care of our spirit does not preclude us from following worldly pursuits under the limitations of the law of Moses; nay, the rational enjoyment of all earthly gifts, the acquisition of wealth, the obtainment of an honoured name, are all blessings which the law sets before us as gifts of God which He bestows on his servants. But we should take heed that, in being worldly, we be careful that we exchange not the substance for a shadow, and make the body the first, the soul the last object of our solicitude. And when we thus move onward, when we are honest in our endeavours to overcome sin and its temptation: the spirit of God will come to our aid, and render easy, every day easier, the work of purification, till at length obstacles which at first seemed to bar our progress on the way of righteousness will not be heeded, not felt, till we arrive at the palace of our Father, the portals of which will then stand open to receive our spirit, purified above the angels by the trials and temptations of an earthly and a sinful life.

It is for a purpose like this, that it is proper to dedicate places of worship, in order that one may encourage the other, and urge him on by a righteous example to become quick in the service of the Lord, to be in very truth a son of Israel, a child of salvation. The spirit loves to link itself to spirit; man loves to see others striving for the same end, it proves to him that there is something actually worthy of attainment in his pursuit. When, therefore, many come to worship the Almighty God, the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, each one will feel himself a link in the great chain of the illustrious line of Abraham's descendants, and will, if he has any regard for the renown of his lineage, any self-respect in his Jewish descent, any fear of his Maker, endeavour to prove by his moral, no less than his religious conduct, that his soul is animated by the sacred fire of devotion to God, and a pure love for his fellow-men; thus demonstrating to his associates in Israel, that he is worthy to be called by the same name which they bear, inasmuch as his deeds and his thoughts are regulated by the same law which they obey, and which at last is the only thing which constitutes us one people amid the nations of the earth.

Therefore, brethren! make this the basis of your work which you have commenced this day, by devoting this place as the spot where you mean to worship the God of your fathers. Be Israelites in the full sense of the word, love God above all, love each other as brothers in faith, love all mankind as the children of the same eternal Parent. But let me exhort you, to remain true to the law which our ancestors have transmitted to us, as the only legacy which they thought worth preserving, when every thing was demanded from them as the price of keeping it, when they surrendered all they possessed, ay, life even, sooner than surrender this.—Remain true, let me entreat you, to the forms even which we have practised for so many centuries, and do not throw aside idly what has stood as a defence to the law, led away by the counsels of the ill-advised advocates for changes and reform. Adopt nothing hastily, but weigh every thing calmly and with care; and know that the enemies of religion often are the very men who profess to deplore defects which only exist in their imagination, and that you would display but little wisdom in following counsels which proceed from suspicious sources.—Let humility be your watchword, listen to instruction, suspect ever your own wisdom; for in humility alone and in distrust of our own mental strength can we discover the evidences of true understanding. And may the Lord thus be with you, as you are true in his service; may He hear your prayer; may He accept your service; may He prosper your labours; may He grant you of his wisdom; may He send his spirit to dwell among you, even in this place which you have dedicated to his worship; and may righteousness increase among you, in order that transgression may be banished, and mental repose be the happy lot of your earthly life, and the divine comfort be yours in the hour of death, and his truth take you into his blessed abode for everlasting in the world to come. May this be the will of our Father in heaven. Amen.

Nissan 12th. } 5603.
April 12th. }

END OF VOLUME FOURTH.